

ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS OF AGRICULTURE

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A Brief History

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ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS OF AGRICULTURE

A Brief History

by

E. B. SWINDLEHURST

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Hon. Duncan Marshall.
Founder.

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About the Author . . .

E. B. SWINDLEHURST

Arrived in Alberta from England, April, 1920. Broke and farmed C.P.R. land north of Edgerton. Became interested in the Vermilion School of Agriculture from a 1927-28 Year Book, left by Carl Heckbert with my father who was at that time Manager of the Co-operative Store in Edgerton.

Attended laying of the dormitory foundation stone at Vermilion in the summer of 1928 and registered that fall as a student. Graduated in the spring of 1930 and decided to return for the third year and continue to University.

1930 was the fall of heavy, frosted crops and low prices. Kept busy until Christmas hauling wheat the 13 miles to town with a team and wagon.

After Christmas started the third year course and in the spring, as a result of the excellence and encouragement of my instructors, attained University Entrance and proceeded to the University of Alberta in the fall of 1931. Those instructors were F. B. Dixon, who taught mathematics, and W. Turnbull whose knowledge of English grammar and ability to impart it were worthy of admiration.

While at the University, engaged in summer work with the Alberta Department of Agriculture, and following graduation in 1934 became a member of the permanent staff. Remained with the Department until retirement in May, 1964, serving during the past ten years as Research Information Editor and Supervisor of the Radio and Information Branch.

BEGINNINGS

People made the schools—so part of this story will be about the students and their activities, and part about the people who guided them.

But before there were schools or students or staff there were men giving thought to Alberta as a province—to its people, particularly those living on the land.

How to get the best farming practices to them was the problem. The Honourable Duncan Marshall was Minister of Agriculture then, and his first response was creation of Alberta's Demonstration Farms. Seven farms, varying in size from 160 to 640 acres were purchased in 1911 at Medicine Hat, Claresholm, Olds, Sedgewick, Vermilion, Stony Plain and Athabasca Landing.

Purpose of the Farms

The purpose of the farms is set out clearly in a report by the Honourable Duncan Marshall in the *Agricultural Gazette* for 1914.

"The Department of Agriculture in the Province of Alberta," he wrote, "has adopted a somewhat different policy with respect to agricultural education in the province than have the other provinces of the Dominion. It has begun with the establishment of demonstration farms. Seven of these farms have been established at different points in the province to represent as nearly as possible the difference in conditions of soil, climate and rainfall, which are so varied in Alberta.

"These farms, consisting in the main of half a section of land are owned and operated entirely under the direction of the Department. Every farm is operated upon the mixed farming principle. A set of reasonably good buildings has been erected on each farm, but nothing very elaborate or expensive has been undertaken.

"A comfortable and sanitary dairy barn to accommodate about thirty milk cows has been built on each place. A horse barn to accommodate about a dozen horses has also been built, together

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with a house for the manager and a house in which the farm hands are boarded.

"The Department is carrying on farming as a commercial enterprise, there being on each farm a herd of dairy cows, a number of hogs, sheep and poultry. Besides this, the feeding of beef cattle is a feature of the farming operations.

"This winter some four hundred steers are being fed at the different farms. The beef steers are all fed in the open. The horses that are not used for work during the winter are wintered in open yards. The breeding hogs are also wintered in the open in the steer yards, so that the work on these farms is carried on pretty much as the well-to-do farmers of the province conduct the business of their own farms."

Choice of Location

In later years there has been criticism of the location of the farms and of erection of the schools on some of these farms.

But Marshall's idea was to spread the schools around the province. He was averse to a central institution, believing that such a centre would educate the boys and girls away from the farm.

And there is little doubt that the farms were intended as forerunners of the schools. The demonstration farms were purchased in 1911. The first of the schools were opened in 1913.

In the *Olds Gazette* for December 22, 1911 appears a report of a speech in the provincial legislature by the Honourable Duncan Marshall. It says in part:

"When I introduced last year the policy of establishing demonstration farms, I stated that this policy would be supplemented shortly by the placing of schools on those farms, because an agricultural school without a farm would be of no value, and a farm without a school would not be of as much value.

"It is not the intention of the Government this year to establish more than two, or at the most, three schools, because we believe this work should go on slowly until there is a demand for it. There

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has been a good deal of argument as to what is the most effective agricultural education, as to whether establishing a large agricultural college meets the demands better than the agricultural schools.

"In Ontario, longer than I can remember, they have had an agricultural college. That college has turned out a great many men who are today occupying prominent positions in Canada and the United States in educational institutions, but the percentage of men who have gone to that agricultural college and gone back to the farm again is very small. I am not exactly clear on the point, but I believe something in the neighbourhood of ten or fifteen per cent of the graduates who have taken the full course at the Ontario Agricultural College have gone back and become farmers.

"Thus the Ontario Agricultural College has been educating the boy off rather than on the farm, and the result is that that province decided to establish agricultural high schools. Everyone knows that seventy-five per cent of the boys who go to the high school attend it for the purpose of educating themselves for other businesses or professions than agriculture.

"There are a number of boys who go to the high school and then back to the farm, but the percentage is not more than twenty-five. Consequently these agricultural teachers find themselves up against a certain amount of prejudice in the high school, and they have only been able to carry on their work with a great deal of difficulty."

The Vermilion Standard of September 4, 1912 had this to say:

"An announcement which will be learned with general feelings of satisfaction and one which is bound to result in considerable advantage to Vermilion has been made by Premier Sifton in a letter to Dr. G. H. W. Ryan of this town. It is to the effect that of the three agricultural schools that the government have decided to open in the province, one is to be started at once on the Vermilion demonstration farm. This is great news and will be hailed with delight.

"As the Standard predicted when we were so fortunate to be selected as a site for the demonstration farm owing to our geographical position, it was bound to lead to something a great deal

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bigger as time passed and the needs of the agricultural education could be met by the establishment of a school such as we are now getting and ultimately to an agricultural college."

Interesting in passing is the location of the demonstration farms and its association with men of influence. With one exception (Claresholm), they were in constituencies of Ministers of the Crown.

Vermilion was in the constituency of the Premier, Honourable A. L. Sifton. The remainder were: Olds, Hon. Duncan Marshall - Minister of Agriculture; Sedgewick, Hon. Chas. Stewart - Minister of Railways; Stony Plain, Hon. Wilf. Gariepy - Minister of Municipal Affairs; Medicine Hat, Hon. A. McLean - Provincial Secretary; Athabasca, Hon. A. G. McKay - Minister of Health. Member of the Provincial Parliament for Claresholm was William Moffatt.

Schools on the Demonstration Farms

That a great deal of thought had been given to the type of agricultural education to be offered in Alberta is indicated also in the Olds Gazette report (December 22, 1911) of the Minister's speech:

"The greatest authority on technical education on the North American continent today," he said, "is Prof. Pritchard, of the Carnegie Foundation. He has been spending his time and has devoted the time of a committee to investigating educational conditions on this continent with no other object than that of finding out the best systems.

"He investigated the Ontario Agricultural College. He found that at Guelph they gave two courses, one a farmer's course and the other a professional course. The farmer's course is two years and the professional course is four years. He found that in that province with a population of over two and a half millions, there were less than two hundred students attending the farmer's course. He made investigation to find out why that was, and he found out that the majority of these two hundred students lived within easy reach of the city of Guelph.

"He investigated Wisconsin University and he found that the agricultural college was working exactly the same. He investigated

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other agricultural colleges and he found that they could only hope to draw from a very limited area, and that in other words the farmer's boy would not travel a long distance from home to attend an agricultural college.

"Consequently the professor recommends what the University of Wisconsin has done, and what other universities in the States have done, that is the establishment of agricultural schools.

"They have been called high schools, but to tell the truth I don't like that word high school in this connection, because it does not want to be of the nature of a high school; they want to be purely agricultural schools established in connection with the demonstration farms, beginning with say a three or four month's course and working up to a two year's course, and then let the student at the end of the two years go to the Agricultural College to finish the scientific course if he wishes to become a professor of agriculture, but at the end of the two year's course a diploma in practical agriculture would be granted by these schools."

But nearer home investigations were also going forward. Fred Bell, one of the first students to register at the Vermilion School of Agriculture (and in the new Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta) tells about this.

He relates how Dr. H. M. Tory and the Liberal M.L.A. for Alexandra, A. Bramley-Moore, went to Denmark and reported on systems of education there.

"These were the men who laid down the plan for the school," Bell says. He speaks of Dr. Tory as one of the greatest men he ever met, and others have echoed that sentiment. Dr. Tory knew faces and people, and he knew boys.

He became chairman of the first Board of Agricultural Education and had an immense influence on the policy of the schools. "A great policy man and a really creative individual," is how Dr. W. H. Cook of the National Research Council describes him. Dr. Tory could see ahead the things that should be done, and had the ability to inspire men to action.

George Harcourt, then Deputy Minister of Agriculture for

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Alberta, is also credited with an influence in initiation of the schools of agriculture.

Harcourt had worked under Dr. Robertson in Ontario, and came west as Deputy Minister of the North West Territories. On formation of the Province of Alberta in 1905, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture. He remained in that office until 1915 when he resigned to join the new Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta.

PROGRESS

Before the schools were built, there was considerable educational activity on the demonstration farms. Farm buildings were erected and farm people encouraged to visit the farms. Short course agricultural schools were conducted and the "Mixed Farming Special" train toured the province bringing to farmers and their wives advice and suggestions on better farming methods.

An editorial in the Olds Gazette of December 6, 1912, describes the last-named event:

"After five weeks of touring the province, during which time every town of agricultural importance has been touched, and every agricultural centre tapped, the provincial government mixed farming special has wound up its tour in Edmonton. During the time it was on the road hundreds of farmers have had it brought home to them in a very realistic manner the advantages of going in for mixed farming, while hundreds of others who have already gone in for this branch of agriculture, have, through the staff of expert lecturers and government officials accompanying the train, been taught many things of advantage to them as farmers. The whole tour has been productive of much good throughout the province, and has resulted in mixed farming being given a great impetus in many districts.

"That the advent of the train was of no mean importance was shown by the big attendance at each stopping place. In the south, in the east, and in the north and west the attendance at all the meetings was phenomenal. Not only the older farmers but the younger men also attended, and many requests have been received asking that the government continue the series of lectures during the coming year.

"A noticeable feature about all the meetings was the attendance of the wives of the farmers. Taking a very keen interest in the poultry exhibition and in the lectures given on the subject, and also in the work of Miss Georgina Stivan, superintendent of Women's Institute and Domestic Science Branch of the Agricultural Department, they attended in large numbers, and as a result of the tour

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of the train many women's institutes have been formed, and will immediately take up active work.

"The train reached Edmonton late on Monday night after being at Lamont during the day, and although the members of the lecturing staff and the livestock used to illustrate the lectures will be relieved of further duties until after the first of the year, it is the intention of the government to keep up the work and interest already started, and as soon at the beginning of the new year as it is practicable to start them, short course schools will be held all over the province where lectures and advice generally to farmers will be given for a week at a time in each town. This work will be on a much larger scale than was attempted during the tour of the train when stops of only half a day were made at each town and at the conclusion of each short course stock judging competitions and other examinations will be held.

"That the tour of the provincial mixed farming special was productive of an immense amount of good is shown from the records of the provincial department of agriculture. Since the train started out hundreds of applications have been received asking for assistance and advice from the government experts in the purchasing of stock and poultry all from farmers who attended the lectures and meetings and are now anxious to start in mixed farming on a larger scale than heretofore."

Responsible for the work of the demonstration farms, and the short courses held in conjunction with them was a young man from Ontario, H. A. Craig.

Before his appointment as Superintendent of Demonstration Farms in 1911, he had already served for four years with the Alberta Department of Agriculture as Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes. In this capacity he had been responsible for farm meetings, agricultural societies, fairs, and general encouragement of improved farm practice throughout the province.

From his home in Carleton County, Ontario, he attended the Ontario Agricultural College and in 1906 obtained his B.S.A. degree with honours. In his final year at Guelph, Mr. Craig was one of



Original school building at Olds constructed in 1913.

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the stock judging team that won first place at the International Exhibition at Chicago.

He later became Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Alberta, and served in this capacity from 1915 to 1938.

In 1912, erection began of a school building on each of the three farms at Vermilion, Olds and Claresholm. All were of the same design and here is their description by the Honourable Duncan Marshall:

"The school building at each of these points consists of a main building 54 by 64 feet. This building has a full height basement, a ground floor, a second floor, and a top floor. The building on each floor, with the exception of the top floor, is divided into two parts by a hall 12 feet wide.

"In the basement on one side of the hall is a dairy room 24 by 36 feet, with a concrete floor where butter making and cheese making are carried on, and also the testing of milk and butter fat. The balance of the room on that side is used for a cloak room and boys' bathroom, fitted up with shower baths. Across the hall is a class room 24 by 36 feet, the balance of the room being a boiler room for heating the building. This room has been used as a live stock judging room during the past winter, but it is the intention of the Department of Agriculture to build a live stock pavilion during the present summer (1914), this room will then be available for other class room work."

He mentions the classroom, library, teacher's office and physics and chemistry laboratory on the main floor, and devotion of the second floor entirely to girls' classes. He then concludes:

"The top floor of the building is an assembly room, about 34 feet wide and some 62 feet long, capable of seating between 300 and 400 people. This room is used for occasional class room work for the whole student body, or for instruction in sewing for the girls, and is also used as a public hall for conventions and other gatherings of farmers. It is available, of course, to the students for their literary society and other entertainments that they may hold."

With the main buildings nearing completion, the next thing

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was the search for staff — not an easy task in those early days. There were few technically trained agriculturists then in Canada, and the few there were had received their training chiefly under eastern conditions.

But principals were found, two of them were graduates of the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, and the other of the Toronto and Manitoba Universities. E. A. Howes became principal at Vermilion, W. J. Elliott was appointed to the school at Olds, and W. J. Stephen arrived to take charge of the Claresholm school.

PRINCIPAL FOR VERMILION COLLEGE APPOINTED. CLASSES WILL OPEN ABOUT NOVEMBER 1, heralded the Vermilion Standard on June 1, 1913. It continued:

“The principal of the Vermilion school is Ernest Albert Howes B.S.A., of the University of Nevada. Mr. Howes’ name is well known in educational circles both in Canada and the United States.

“He was born in the year 1872 on a farm near Vanleek Hill, in Prescott County, Ontario. He was educated at the public and high schools of Ontario, and is a graduate of the Ottawa normal school, and spent eight years teaching public school. He was one of the teachers selected by Dr. James Robertson to take charge of school garden work in Ontario, and he started the first school garden in the province at Bowesville near Ottawa.

“He took agriculture short courses at Cornell, Columbia and Clark Universities, as well as the Ontario Agricultural College. He was appointed principal of the MacDonald Consolidated School at Guelph, which position he occupied for four years, which school specializes in household science, manual training and elementary agriculture. He then attended the Ontario Agricultural College, from which he graduated securing the degree of B.S.A.

“He spent one year with the Dominion Seed Branch in the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, in charge of the germination laboratory and the field plot tests, after which he left for the State of Nevada. For one year he was agronomist at the irrigation station at Reno, and then was appointed professor of agronomy at University of Nevada, which position he occupied until he resigned about a month ago to take the principalship of the Vermilion School of Agriculture.

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"Mr. Howes comes to his work in Alberta with the recommendation of having achieved success in every one of the positions that he formerly occupied. He has the experience, the training and the enthusiasm to make a success of his work in Alberta, and on his resigning at Nevada, he received very flattering press notices in the newspapers of the university city there."

About the Olds School of Agriculture and the appointment of Mr. Elliott the Olds Gazette had this to say:

"A staff of competent teachers will be engaged and the work will be under the direction of Mr. W. J. Elliott, B.S.A. who has been employed for the last two years by the Natural Resources Department of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company as their superintendent of agriculture, and who will be principal of the school.

"Mr. Elliott is well known in the province and he has assisted the Department of Agriculture at their short course schools and with the demonstration train, and has proved himself in that work perhaps one of the most efficient teachers in the different branches of agriculture in western Canada. Mr. Elliott was born on an Ontario farm, in the County of Huron in 1875. He received his education in the public school and Seaforth Collegiate Institute attending the Collegiate for four years after passing the entrance examination.

"In the securing of his education, Mr. Elliott is a young man who made his own way entirely, and the money with which he educated himself was made mostly by working as a hired man with neighbouring farmers, than which there is no better experience for a foundation in agricultural education. It had been his ambition to attend the Agricultural College at Guelph, and in the fall of 1895 he made his way there with the capital of \$46.00, so that he practically had to work his way through that institution, which he did, graduating in 1898 with the degree of B.S.A.

"During his collegiate and agricultural college days, through working hard, he found some time for healthy sport, and was regarded as one of the best football players in Ontario. After his graduation from Guelph, he spent a short time in a cheese factory

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at Island Lake for two years; then for a year and a half he managed a large creamery at Glenville, Minnesota.

"In the spring of 1903 he engaged with the Dairy and Food Department of that state to assist in the organization and erection of creameries, and in the fall of the same year he took charge of the Dairy and Animal Industry Departments of the Agricultural College at Bozeman, Montana, and in 1908 was made Dean of the short courses of agriculture in connection with this college, which position he occupied up to January, 1910. This experience in connection with extension work and teaching in the college of agriculture in the state has especially fitted Mr. Elliott for his work here. In January, 1910, he accepted the position which he has just resigned with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and has been a resident of Alberta for the last three years.

"Mr. Elliott takes charge of the school at Olds with a first-hand knowledge of conditions in the province, as well as an enthusiasm for the system of agricultural instruction that has to be given at these schools. He is a born teacher, and has the happy faculty of imparting some of his enthusiasm to his students. He has addressed meetings at different parts of the province of Alberta, and there are few men who can give his audience a better understanding of the subject he has under consideration."

Not less enthusiastic was the report of the Claresholm Review in which was announced the appointment of W. J. Stephen, B.A., B.S.A., as principal of the Claresholm school.

"Mr. Stephen," the Review noted, "though a stranger in Alberta, is well-known in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and is at the present time engaged by the Provincial Department of Education in Manitoba to arrange for the introduction of agricultural instruction into the high schools of that province. Mr. Stephen has the advantage of being a graduate in arts as well as in agriculture. He was born and raised on a farm in Oxford County in the province of Ontario, where mixed farming is carried on extensively, and was educated in the country school and took his secondary education at the Collegiate Institute in St. Mary's, Ontario.

"After attending model school in Stratford, he taught as prin-

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cipal of the Bolton Public School for three years. He next took an honour course in chemistry and mineralogy in the University of Toronto, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1909. The same year he was inspector for the Toronto City Dairy, and in the spring of 1910 graduated in pedagogy from the Faculty of Education, Toronto. Later he attended the Manitoba Agricultural College, and completed four years standing there in March of 1911, when he was appointed Principal of the High School at Burks Falls, Ontario.

"At the end of three months he resigned to accept the position of science master in Stratford Collegiate Institute. He returned west in the spring of 1912 and spent the summer farming in Saskatchewan, and during this time did considerable judging of live stock at the summer fairs in that province. Last fall he returned to Manitoba Agricultural College to complete his studies. His graduation marks the first arts man to take a degree from Manitoba's young institution.

"It will be seen that Mr. Stephen, while occupying a good position in educational institutions, was interested enough in agriculture to leave the former line of work and fit himself by training at an agricultural college for the teaching of agriculture, which he regards as of paramount importance in Canadian education. This naturally shows his enthusiasm for this line of work, and he comes to the province of Alberta with qualifications that should fit him, together with his energy, to take a foremost place in the development of agricultural education here."

In the meantime under provisions of the Agricultural Schools Act, members had been appointed to the Board of Agricultural Education.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The Agricultural Schools Act states that the board together with the Minister, shall prepare the scheme of practical and scientific work to be done by students attending each and every school, shall prescribe the course of study, appoint examiners, and in addition be an advisory board to aid the Minister in all agricultural educational work.

The men to whom these responsibilities were assigned were Henry Marshall Tory, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.C. (Chairman); John Gunion Rutherford, V.S., C.M.G. (Vice Chairman); J. C. Drewry, Cowley; John Hector McArthur, Milherton; James Murray, B.S.A., Suffield; Ernest Lamont Richardson, B.S.A., Calgary; Bryce Wright, De Winton; Frederick West, Vermilion; and Daniel Webster Warner, Edmonton.

Secretary throughout, until October 18, 1920, when the board ceased to function, was Zacharias McIlmoyle. Mr. McIlmoyle was at that time private secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, but later he became successively Secretary to the Department of Agriculture, Assistant to the Deputy Minister, Assistant Live Stock Commissioner, Chairman of the Debt Adjustment Board and member of the Tilley East Area Board.

Dr. Longman, former Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Alberta, describes McIlmoyle as a wonderful man. He could smooth down the most irate character.

"I remember a man going into his office one day, blustering and rampaging," said Dr. Longman. "Zach. just listened to him, then said: 'Look here my friend, I don't have to take that; in fact I don't have to listen to you. The sooner you get down off your high horse and treat your friends with respect, the sooner you'll get some recognition.' The blusterer stopped right in his tracks and went out."

Of the appointees to the Board of Agricultural Education the Olds Gazette of August 22, 1913, had this to say:

"In appointing Dr. Tory as chairman of the board, the Minister of Agriculture has selected the recognized highest educational auth-

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ority in the province. Besides being head of the provincial university, Dr. Tory has the keenest kind of sympathy with agricultural education in its every branch, and especially with the system of schools of agriculture that are being established in the province. He has given a good deal of time to the study of agricultural problems and is just now returning from Europe, where he has been not only studying agricultural credits but giving a good deal of time to looking into the system of agricultural schools in Denmark and other European countries.

“Dr. J. G. Rutherford is now head of the agriculture branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was for a number of years live stock commissioner and veterinary director general at Ottawa, and is recognized as one of the best live stock and agricultural authorities in Canada. He is a man of experience and ability, and his advice and counsel will be valuable in connection with the work of the board. No better appointment than Dr. Rutherford could be made. Besides being a graduate of veterinary science, Dr. Rutherford is also a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College.

“E. L. Richardson has for the past half dozen years been secretary of the Calgary Exhibition Association. He has been closely identified with the development of agriculture and live stock, especially in the southern part of the province. He is a graduate of Ontario Agricultural College, and a man of training and experience.

“James Murray of Suffield was for several years superintendent of the Dominion experimental farm at Brandon, Manitoba, where he gained valuable experience in western agriculture, and is regarded as an authority on cultivation. For the past two years Mr. Murray has been manager of the Wheatlands Company, and has conducted very large farming operations at Suffield between Bassano and Medicine Hat, and will bring to the board an intimate knowledge of Alberta Agriculture. Mr. Murray is also a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College.

“Mr. J. C. Drewry, Cowley, Alberta, is one of the leading live stock breeders in the province. He has just returned from a successful tour of exhibitions, going as far east as Winnipeg and exhibiting at the Dominion Fair at Brandon, and returning with all

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the senior championships given at Winnipeg, Brandon and Regina exhibitions in the Percheron classes. Besides being a breeder of Percherons, Mr. Drewry has an excellent herd of Holsteins, and is one of the representative breeders of the province of Alberta.

“Mr. Bryce Wright, of De Winton, is a well known breeder of Clydesdale horses and Shorthorn cattle and his entries at Calgary exhibition have always been well within the money. Mr. Wright has been closely identified with agricultural education in Alberta ever since the province was formed, and has done a great deal of useful work for the Department of Agriculture in the short course schools for the past half dozen winters.

“Mr. John Hector McArthur, of Milnerton, is a good practical farmer, living some 18 miles east of Innisfail. Mr. McArthur is a breeder of Shorthorns, and has been identified with the Milnerton Agricultural Society since its organization. He was secretary of the Local Improvement District in that locality and at the present time is councillor of the newly organized municipality. He is a progressive up-to-date farmer, a member of the U.F.A. and will be a good representative farmer on the board.

“Mr. Frederick West, Sr., is an old-timer in the west. He came to Manitoba in 1880, where he was a very successful farmer and stock raiser. He moved to Alberta some six years ago and has been farming some 20 miles north of Vermilion. He is an up-to-date farmer and stock raiser.

“Mr. D. W. Warner, of Clover Bar, is one of the live progressive farmers who came to Alberta from the United States. Since coming to this province he has been identified with agricultural development in many ways. He has been a director of the Edmonton Exhibition Association for a good many years, and has done a lot of good work in assisting to build up the exhibition. He was one of the original organizers of the Alberta Farmers' Association, which afterwards became the United Farmers of Alberta. Mr. Warner has been a prominent member of this organization and repeatedly elected as a member of its executive board. He has done considerable institute work throughout the province. At the first meeting of the board, held on Wednesday of this week, Dr. Rutherford was vice-chairman of the Board.”

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It was in Edmonton, at the Legislative Building, that the board held that memorable meeting. August 20, 1913, was the date. Dr. Tory presided, and following election of Dr. Rutherford as vice-chairman, date of school opening was discussed.

October 28 was the chosen date, and it was further moved that March 28, 1914, would end the session. Present in the minds of the members were the needs of the cropping season. The dates must fit completion of fall work and allow time at the end of the term for spring seeding preparation. Christmas holidays were to extend from Wednesday, December 24, 1913, to Monday, January 5, 1914.

Age was then considered. How old should the boys be before entering the schools, and what entrance qualifications were desirable? Not less than 14 years was the entrance age agreed on for the 1913-14 term. In the following year, this minimum was raised to 15 years for the 1915-16 term and 16 years for the 1916-17 session.

It was also agreed that no entrance examination should be asked for that first year, but students would be required to provide satisfactory evidence of moral character and physical health when requested by the principal.

About courses of study for the girls, it was decided that a domestic science course of eight weeks should be conducted at each of the three schools starting as follows: Claresholm, October 28, 1913; Olds, January 6, 1914; and Vermilion, March 3, 1914. Admission age for girls was set at 16 years and no entrance examination was required. (So keen was the response that in the second and subsequent years a full five months course was offered in Domestic Science.)

A draft of the course of study in agriculture was submitted to the meeting, but it was agreed that details of the course in domestic science be left to the chairman and principals of the three schools. It was also moved that they set up the courses in English and Mathematics. Selection of text books was delegated to the Minister of Agriculture and the three principals.

The final motion of that meeting was that the regular staff of

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each school consist of the principal and three instructors for the agricultural subjects, together with an instructor and assistant instructor in domestic science.

Examinations and Extension

At the next meeting, on February 23, 1914, the principals of the three schools attended. They were E. A. Howes, Vermilion; W. J. Elliott, Olds; and W. J. Stephen, Claresholm.

Examinations were discussed, and the three principals together with Dr. Tory were delegated as the examining board. Marks were set at 40% for a pass, 60% for second class honours, and 75% for first class honours.

It was decided that excursions be run to each school in the coming summer, when lectures would be given to both boy and girl students and to the public. It was also suggested that each principal should experiment with the crops in which the people of his district were most interested; and that the staff of each school should assist the people of their districts as much as possible and especially try to encourage alfalfa growing by the farmers.

Term End

With the first term completed, the board and the principals met again. That was on May 12, 1914.

The Honourable Duncan Marshall, who regularly attended the meetings of the board, outlined the work done during the term and spoke highly of the interest of students and staff in their work. He also spoke of the popularity of the course for girls, and of the success of this course at each of the schools.

Should students between terms be expected to work on a farm? This question arose as the result of a Claresholm student teaching public school following his first term of the course. It was thought, however, that only a very small percentage of students would be likely to do anything between terms except farming, and that this boy in teaching school was perhaps in a position to do much good in his school as a result of his agricultural course.

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At this meeting it was decided to establish the domestic science course in each of the three schools of agriculture for the whole of the term, and a committee was named to arrange the course. Members were Dr. Tory, Miss M. M. Goldie, E. A. Howes, W. J. Elliott and W. J. Stephen.

The principals were congratulated on the splendid system of agricultural education established in the province, and the splendid work done during the past term. Mr. Drewry suggested that the Minister of Agriculture use his influence with the Government to have them extend the system of agricultural schools so as to include other portions of the province.

Changes

When next the board met, on March 16, 1915, E. L. Drewry had died, and James Murray and Bryce Wright had left the province. Appointed in their stead were Lew Hutchinson, Duhamel; Charles S. Noble, Nobleford; and Professor A. E. Shuttleworth, Blackie.

(Dr. Shuttleworth was born at Mt. Albert, Ontario. He graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, and after receiving his B.S.A. from McGill University, taught for a year in the Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, P.E.I. After spending a short time at Harvard, he became Professor of Chemistry at the O.A.C., which position he held for ten years. During this period he was granted leave of absence, and studied for two years at Halle and Goettingen, in Germany, and took his Ph.D. degree. Owing to ill-health, Dr. Shuttleworth gave up college work, and after farming some years in Ontario, came west. He finally settled at Blackie, where he raised Clydesdale horses and Shorthorn cattle.)

Mr. Marshall outlined the work of the three schools of agriculture during the term, and stated that a Faculty of Agriculture would be established in the University of Alberta this year with E. A. Howes as Dean.

The board decided that diplomas would be awarded on completion of the two-year course in either agriculture or domestic science. They also agreed that boys who wished to continue to

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the University would be granted entrance if they had attained an average of 65% in examinations at the close of the two-year course, and were recommended to the board by the principal of the school they had attended.

E. A. Howes becomes Dean

At the next board meeting on May 18, 1915, Dr. Tory announced that Mr. Howes had been officially appointed Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture in the University of Alberta by the Governing Board of the University. The Honourable Mr. Marshall announced that F. S. Grisdale had been appointed principal of the Vermilion School of Agriculture to succeed Dean Howes.

In his outline of the work done at the Vermilion school, Mr. Howes mentioned that he would have twelve students from there taking the course at the University. Mr. Elliott advised that nine boys from the Olds school had signified their intention of attending the University, and Mr. Stephen reported that sixteen graduates from Claresholm expected to attend.

Interest and Encouragement

From the beginning, commercial firms of Alberta showed interest in the Schools of Agriculture and offered aid and encouragement to schools and students.

At that same Board meeting on May 18, 1915, the Honourable Duncan Marshall stated that arrangements had been made at each school during the last term for the growing of alfalfa seed by the schools. This alfalfa seed had been supplied to the Schools of Agriculture by Mr. McGregor of Medicine Hat, free of charge. The banks of the province had offered to supply seed corn to the Schools of Agriculture for experimental work.

He also advised that Mr. P. Burns of P. Burns and Company, Calgary, again gave one hundred dollars to the Olds School of Agriculture to be used for prizes for students at the close of the last term. The Crown Lumber Company gave fifty dollars for prizes at the Claresholm School of Agriculture.

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To the present day, encouragement of this type from numerous firms and organizations has continued, and there are many graduates who remember with pride the prizes received through the generosity of the Schools' many well-wishers and friends.

The Board of Agricultural Education functioned until 1920, a period of seven years. With election of the U.F.A. Government in 1921, Marshall's term of office ended. The deputy minister became superintendent of schools of agriculture and the Board of Agricultural Education was suspended.

It was not until 1944, following strong recommendations by the deputy minister, O. S. Longman, that the board again became active.

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Under the Agricultural Aid Act of 1912, a sum of \$500,000 was set aside by the Parliament of Canada for education, instruction and demonstration. Grants were made to the provinces on the basis of population and Alberta's share in that year was \$46,094.95. The objective was to bring the benefits of scientific research "to the great multitude who today till the fields of Canada."

The Agricultural Instruction Act of 1913 appropriated ten million dollars to be available during the ten years ending 31st March, 1923. Of this \$700,000 was available for the year 1913-14; \$800,000 for 1914-15; \$900,000 for 1915-16; \$1,000,000 for 1916-17; \$1,100,000 for 1917-18 and for each of the subsequent five years.

Division was as follows:

- 1) \$20,000 for veterinary colleges, irrespective of provincial lines.
- 2) \$20,000 for every province regardless of population, thus accounting for \$180,000.
- 3) The remainder of the yearly appropriation to be divided among the nine provinces on the basis of population.

Alberta's share amounted to:

1913-14	\$46,094.95
Yearly Increase, up to and including 1916-17	5,215.46
1914-15	51,310.41
1917-23	66,956.79

The Government of Alberta decided that the major portion of the Federal grant should be used in furthering the work of the Schools of Agriculture, and here is how that first year allotment was expended:

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No. 1. Three Schools of Agriculture	\$31,500.00
Operation and maintenance	\$18,000.00
Equipment	9,000.00
Buildings	4,500.00
No. 2. Demonstration Farms	8,000.00
No. 3. Dairying—instruction and competition	4,000.00
No. 4. Domestic Science	2,000.00
No. 5. Miscellaneous	594.95
	<hr/>
	\$46,094.95
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In a report on the Agricultural Instruction Act (Sessional Paper No. 93 - A1915) it was mentioned that:

“The Department of Agriculture of Alberta had established demonstration farms at six points—Medicine Hat, Claresholm, Olds, Sedgewick, Vermilion, and Stony Plain. Those were intended ‘to work out in practical demonstration on a farm conducted as any first-class up-to-date farmer would conduct his own business, the results of the experiments made on the experimental farms operated by the Dominion Government in the province’. The provincial Minister, Hon. Duncan Marshall, had another object also in mind—the establishing of agricultural schools at these demonstration farms.

“The providing of funds for education, demonstration, and instruction by the Dominion Government opened the way to these schools. In visiting the provincial department, under your instructions, an understanding was arrived at that if the Provincial Government would erect the buildings, the Federal grant would provide funds for the equipment of the schools and their maintenance. The result was that three schools were erected in 1912-13, at Olds, Vermilion and Claresholm, and preparations made for the starting of instruction in the fall of 1913.”

On expiration of the term of the Agricultural Instruction Act in 1923, the provinces expressed hope that the Act would be renewed. They were disappointed in this but the Federal Government in 1923 did set aside an amount of \$900,000 to be divided among the provinces. This was \$200,000 less than had been granted under the Agricultural Instruction Act during the previous six years.

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On January 25, 1924, the following letter was addressed to the Honourable George Hoadley from the Honourable W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture for Canada, advising termination of grants by the Federal Government for agricultural instruction:

“Dear Mr. Hoadley;” (it read)

“At the meeting of a representative delegation from most of the Provinces with Premier King and some of his Colleagues a short time ago, it was practically decided that owing to the very heavy demands upon our Federal revenues, it would be necessary to suspend further payments to the provinces under the provisions of the Agricultural Instruction Act, which lapsed last year.

“To stop these Federal grants last year, immediately on the termination of the Act, would, it was felt by the Government, necessitate the various provinces either finding a corresponding, additional, new source of revenue, or else suspending many of the services that had hitherto been paid for out of this Federal grant.

“To meet this situation, it was decided to vote \$900,000 last year, to extend this work for another year and thereby afford the Provinces one year’s grace in which to prepare for taking these services over.

“The Government regrets that this step is so necessary at this time, but it is only one of the many retrenchments imposed upon us by the public demand, that Canada’s Budget must be made to balance as soon as possible.

“This, therefore, is to be taken as a formal intimation that no further Agricultural Instruction Grants will be paid by the Federal Treasury.

“Again regretting the urgency and necessity of this step and trusting your own provincial revenues will be sufficiently buoyant to take care of the more pressing phases of the situations thus occasioned, I remain,

Yours very truly,
W. R. Motherwell.”

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But the provinces were not for ever to be left out in the cold as far as agricultural instruction grants were concerned. Later Federal Aid included grants under the Youth Training Act of 1937, the Vocational Training Co-ordination Act of 1942, and the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act of December, 1961. From all these, Alberta's Schools of Agriculture have benefited, and provision has been made under the last-named Act for assistance to continue until March 31, 1967.

THE SEARCH FOR STAFF

Following appointment of those first principals, competent staff was the next requirement.

O. S. Longman, the first instructor of farm mechanics at the Claresholm school, tells that while operating a threshing machine in Manitoba he was surprised to receive a wire from the Alberta Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Duncan Marshall, offering him a position of instructor in farm mechanics at a magnificent salary of \$100 a month for five months. Employment was also to be provided for the balance of the year at the same salary if his services proved satisfactory.

Mr. Longman hesitated to accept since he had majored in agronomy but on consideration accepted, and arrived at Claresholm on November 7, 1913.

"I arrived at Claresholm to find that an old classmate (and room mate) was principal," he relates. "Also P. M. Abel, another classmate, and James C. Hooper who had been botany instructor at Manitoba Agricultural College. All the staff were excited about the new work they were to undertake."

Construction of the buildings was not complete. Tools and equipment were still in the packing cases. Erection of the shop had only just begun. An arrangement was made with the contractor for assistance by the students under Longman's supervision. With 25 students available for three afternoons a week the rough work by the end of the week was completed and the contractor left to do the finishing.

Mr. Longman was not too happy about farm mechanics instruction since he was much more interested in agronomy. During the summer of 1914 he indicated to Honourable Duncan that if any openings occurred in field husbandry at the schools he would be interested.

In the summer of 1915, A. E. Howes became dean of the faculty of agriculture at the University of Alberta. In the fall of 1915 O. S. Longman was appointed field husbandry instructor at

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the Olds school to succeed F. S. Grisdale who succeeded Dean Howes at Vermilion.

We mentioned earlier that in his speech to the Legislature in the fall of 1911, the Honourable Duncan Marshall told of investigations by Professor Pritchard into the agricultural educational systems of this continent.

He spoke of the work of the University of Wisconsin and of the professor's recommendation with respect to local schools instead of one central institution. "Consequently," he said, "the professor recommends what the University of Wisconsin has done and what other Universities in the States have done, that is the establishment of agricultural schools."

It is little wonder then that Marshall made enquiries in Wisconsin about the availability of teachers for his schools of agriculture. And it was there that he found one of his most faithful and likeable instructors, George R. Holeton, who remained at the Olds school from 1913 to 1944.

George Holeton was raised on a Wisconsin farm and later attended the Stout Institute at Menomene. After graduation he taught in the agricultural college at Winnebago, then went to Madison and taught in the city schools. He then took over the farm and was there interviewed by Marshall.

His son, R. O. Holeton, now a pharmacist in Edmonton, tells about Marshall's visit to the farm one day, engaging his Dad, and how the family arrived in Canada and settled in an old house at the college. "We always had some chickens and a cow or two," he said.

George Holeton was a man of fine ideals and had the faculty of getting along with people. Carpentry was his chief subject, but he is remembered also for his organization and work with the school fairs, for his activities in the school orchestra, and for his services to church and community.

"Canada is a land of ice and snow inhabited by 'Esquimeaux'" is quoted as one of his sayings. But he enjoyed Canada and its associations, and with his knack of making people feel important was liked by all who knew him.

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At Vermilion, G. L. Shanks was the first farm mechanics instructor.

He tells how on his arrival they had just about finished the outside shell of the carpenter shop, and how students and staff got together and put on the shiplap downstairs and the V-joint upstairs.

Excellent tools were provided, he relates. Farm mechanics in those early days consisted of woodworking and blacksmithing. There was little time to do anything with farm machinery.

Mr. Shanks was from Rivers, Manitoba, and a graduate of the Manitoba Agricultural College in 1912. He worked on his father's farm that summer, spent the winter in the extension service of the province of Manitoba and came to Vermilion for the school term in the fall of 1913.

The first staff, he recalls, were E. A. Howes, J. G. Taggart, E. S. Hopkins, H. Scott, and G. L. Shanks. G. W. Scott came periodically from Edmonton to instruct in dairying, and Dr. P. R. Talbot to lecture in veterinary science.

Here are the names and duties of those first staffs:

Agricultural Schools Staff

1913

Vermilion

A. E. Howes	Principal
Herb. Scott	Farm Manager and Livestock
G. L. Shanks	Farm Mechanics
J. G. Taggart	Animal Husbandry
E. S. Hopkins	Science
G. W. Scott	Dairying

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Olds

W. J. Elliott	Principal
F. S. Grisdale	Field Husbandry
Miss M. M. Goldie	Household Science
Miss N. Lawson	Asst. Household Science
G. R. Holeton	Farm Mechanics
J. F. Fowler	Science

Claresholm

W. J. Stephen	Principal
J. C. Hooper	Science
P. M. Abel	Animal Husbandry
O. S. Longman	Farm Mechanics
H. S. Pearson	Dairy
J. H. McNally	Farm Manager, Math., English

AND SO THE SCHOOLS WERE BORN

Perhaps no other system of education has had so widespread an influence as these schools of agriculture of the Province of Alberta.

They opened the way for agricultural education at the grass roots. Here was no distinction of students and little restriction. If a boy or girl had the ability and desire to learn, the doors were open and help was given.

Nowhere in the field of education have instructors been found with a more sympathetic understanding — an understanding so necessary for the work to be accomplished. Most of the students had little academic training, but their ability and progress when offered the opportunity aroused the admiration of the instructors and inspired them to still greater effort. It was a matter of staff inspiring the students and students inspiring the staff.

There was a friendliness in the schools; brought about to some extent by the age of the students. Some of them were older than their teachers, and had perhaps a little better knowledge of practical farming under western conditions

Dr. Taggart mentioned this aspect of the times. The country was new and all were learning. Management practices of eastern Canada were not always best for the west.

He spoke of the impression made on him by George F. Warren, founder of the science of farm management at Cornell. Warren made several surveys in New York State between 1906 and 1910.

Speaking at one of the technical short courses at Guelph in 1910, he said then that farmers probably knew more about farming than non-farmers. The way to find out was to see what they were doing.

“Warren set me on the track of critically examining the doctrines we were preaching in the province,” Dr. Taggart said.

So students and staff learned from each other. Later, much later, (it was in the 1930's when Miss L. Milne was instructor at

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Vermilion), a chicken was being prepared in the lab. for cooking. "Don't you use the feet, Miss Milne?" one of the girls asked — and on a word of encouragement proceeded to show 'how mother used to do it.'

But during that first term, the Household Science course was held at each school for eight weeks only. Miss Goldie and Miss Lawson began the course at Claresholm on October 28, travelled to Olds to start the course there on January 6, and concluded at Vermilion from March 3 on.

The following brief biographies appeared in the Claresholm Review on October 23, 1913:

"Miss M. Goldie, Instructor in Household Science. — With the realization of the tremendous power that a strong household science course could exert in aid of rural uplift, the Minister of Agriculture considered long and chose wisely when Miss Goldie was asked to assume the responsibility devolving on the head of the girl's department.

"Miss Goldie is a Canadian by birth and education. Prior to entering college, she laid a solid ground work for future scientific education in the public and high schools of her native town, Guelph, Ontario. Her highly creditable standing upon graduation from Macdonald Institute induced her to take up post graduate work along the lines of flour testing and bread baking. This training brought her into immediate demand after leaving the Ontario Agricultural College. Her first line of endeavour was lecturing to the Women's Institutes in the province in cooking. After this Miss Goldie was elected to take charge of the household science department of an eastern school, where, along with regular school work, she obtained valuable experience in teaching older students in industrial classes.

"Should the people of southern Alberta respond to the household science course as indications point, the efforts to get a teacher of Miss Goldie's calibre will be well repaid.

"Miss Nan Lawson, Assistant in Household Science, was born at Inverness, Scotland, and while very young, her parents decided to come to western Canada and become pioneers in the building of

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our great Canadian West. Her first home was in Winnipeg and later, her parents decided to make Calgary, Alberta, their permanent home.

"Miss Lawson received her early education in the Calgary Collegiate Institute, where she proved her worth as a very capable and energetic student, and where she obtained her Honour Matriculation.

"She then chose to take her college course at the State Normal School of Manual Arts and Home Economics at Santa Barbara, California, which is regarded as one of the best home economics schools in America, and where honour matriculation is required to enter. Throughout her college course she maintained her high standing as a student and was successful in securing honours in dressmaking and millinery.

"After graduating from the State Normal School, she was chosen to fill a position on the staff of the public and high schools of Santa Barbara, where she received a valuable experience in teaching domestic science and domestic art.

"Miss Lawson's splendid training and her practical experience make her a valuable acquisition to the staff of the Claresholm School of Agriculture."

A member of the first class at Vermilion was Miss Beth Witherbe. Interested in learning to sew, she asked if she might take the sewing classes alone. Advised, however, that it was all or none, she joined the school and took the course.

She had a great admiration for Mr. Howes, as did all his students. "You are having the best time anyone will have in this school," he told them.

Young people in those days, Miss Witherbe points out, had difficulty in expressing themselves in public. The lits., debates and other social functions at the school helped considerably in drawing out and providing that confidence and experience that proved so useful in later life.

There are others too who recall with pleasure this aspect of the schools.

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Mr. M. W. Malyon, Poultry Instructor at Olds for many years, speaks of the importance of the social life of the schools. "You only had to see the difference in some cases," he says, "of students arriving as freshmen and leaving as graduates. The girls improved in dress and deportment. The boys attained self confidence and an ability to take part in social affairs."

Frank Stevenett, a student of the first class at Olds, also has a word about the social activities. "A history could be written of the celebrations on the top floor of the main building," he writes. "Every dance was led off with a grand march always directed by Mr. Elliott. Many of our graduates tell us that the social life at the O.S.A. was a most important part of the course, particularly in the formative years of the school."

But the top floors of the schools of agriculture buildings were more than assembly halls for the students. Visiting celebrities used them to address farmers and their wives and the Honourable Duncan Marshall to preach the gospel of agriculture and of the schools.

Extracts from the Vermilion Standard of August 11, 1915, tell of one such gathering. "FARMERS' EXCURSION TO DEMONSTRATION FARM" was the headline.

"The school of agriculture and the demonstration farm at Vermilion was inspected Wednesday by about 700 excursionists from points on the C.N.R. all the way from Stony Plain on the west to Lloydminster on the east. Farmers and their wives, sons and daughters were well pleased with what they saw. But the chief result will be the fulfilment of the purpose of the excursion in the development of an increased interest in the school, where the farmer's son and daughter can secure an education of exceedingly practical value.

"During the function eleven farmers' daughters made enquiries and one remarked how lovely it would be to attend such a school. One father said he had three sons aged 16, 18 and 22. He would like them all to attend, but was particularly anxious to know if the 16-year old could learn the mechanical work. One young man expressed the desire to take the course because his boy friend had been at the school last year, and when he returned home had made a kitchen cabinet for his mother.

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"The Vermilion citizens, with their brass band, welcomed the excursionists at the depot. The local automobile owners generously conveyed the visitors to and from the school, which is a half-mile south of the depot. The Women's Institute of Vermilion assisted in serving free lunches which were provided by the department visitors.

"The Minister told of a farmer who had given his boy 'a winter's fun' at the school in order to get more work out of the boy in the summer. The plan worked wondrously, for the boy developed an enthusiastic interest in his work on the farm and helped his dad raise better crops and summerfallow more than ever before.

"'All honour to the women of the prairies'." Mr. Marshall declared amid applause. "'If we are going to have a successful province we must have contentment and happiness in the home. Men, before you spend \$150.00 on a binder, look in the kitchen and see if your wife needs a \$15.00 washing machine. Unhitch that gasoline engine from the pump and use it on your wife's churn.

"'Ninety-five per cent of the city people have spent their all at an age of 55, and for what? Get a small farm and begin building a home thereon and at 55 no employer can discharge you. That's the kind of gospel that is being preached to the boys and girls of Alberta to lay the foundations of a contented, prosperous, happy and sociable people'."

And then, of course, there was that never-to-be-forgotten day when the school was officially opened. Again the Standard reports:

"Monday, November 17, was a red letter day in the history of Vermilion and district, when the first of the agricultural schools of the province was officially opened by one of the greatest and most notable gatherings ever witnessed here. During the afternoon Premier Sifton and party went over the demonstration farm and college buildings and were greatly pleased with their visit. Large numbers of visitors attended classes at the school where lectures on livestock and dairying were given by the instructors of the school during the afternoon session and the expressions from all sides were of a highly complimentary nature regarding the buildings, equipment and nature of the practical course of the studies conducted.

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"When the chairman, Dr. G. H. W. Ryan, mayor of the town, rose to open the evening proceedings, not only was every seat in the immense assembly hall of the school occupied, but scores were compelled to stand along the walls and stairway head. The assemblage must have considerably exceeded four hundred in number and it was pleasing to notice the very large representation of the agricultural population of the district, a marked evidence of the rapidly growing desire for and increased interest centred in agricultural education among those whose efforts in their chosen vocation represent the very life of the country.

"It was indeed an auspicious occasion — the official opening of the first of the three provincial agricultural schools in which courses are now being conducted. Seated upon the platform were the Honourable Arthur L. Sifton, Premier of Alberta; Honourable J. R. Boyle, Minister of Education; Honourable Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture and originator of the system of agricultural education now encouraged in the province; Dr. H. M. Tory, President of the University of Alberta and Chairman of the Board of Agricultural Education; Geo. H. Hudson, M.P.P. for the constituency of Wainwright; Geo. Harcourt, deputy minister of agriculture; Osborne Scott, assistant to general passenger agent of C.N.R.; and Messrs. Fred West of Vermilion and W. D. Warner of Clover Bar, two members of the Board of Agricultural Education."

Official opening of the schools at Claresholm and Olds followed on November 19 and November 21, and a similar array of important people attended.

The Claresholm Review of November 20, 1913 tells us that "The occasion afforded by the formal opening of the Claresholm School of Agriculture, for the gathering of a very large crowd of visitors from every part of the district which is served by this school, brought to this town four of the members of the cabinet, four of the members of the Legislature who have not as yet attained cabinet honours, two prominent educationists of the province, a large concourse of the parents and the friends of the students and farmers attracted from every part of southern Alberta, and practically every citizen of this town together with the visitors were at the school at some time during the afternoon and the evening.

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"During the afternoon, every part of the demonstration farm was under constant and keen surveillance. But the evening was the fitting climax. Long before eight o'clock the School building, with its commodious classrooms and spacious corridors was alive with visitors and when at about 8:30 adjournment was made to the large auditorium, the extent of the crowd could be appreciated.

"Over 500 filled the room, every available inch of space being occupied and still there must have been one hundred who were in other parts of the building preparing for the entertainment of guests or inspecting more closely the equipment of the classrooms. Upon the platform at the southern end of the hall were gathered the speakers and others of the notable visitors. Surrounding Mayor Holmes who was chairman, were Hon. Duncan Marshall, Minister of Agriculture; Hon. C. R. Mitchell, Minister of Public Works; Hon. A. J. McLean, Provincial Secretary; Hon. J. R. Boyle, Minister of Education; Dr. Tory, President of the University of Alberta and Chairman of the Board of Agricultural Education; Dr. Coffin, Principal of the Calgary Normal School; J. P. McArthur, M.P.P. (Gleichen); J. H. McColl, M.P.P. (Arcadia); J. A. McNaughton, M.P.P. (Little Bow); Wm. Moffatt, M.P.P. (Claresholm) and others. An orchestra, consisting of Messrs. Shanks, Abel, Cornthwaite and Moffatt, interspersed the program pleasingly with musical selections."

Mayor Holmes welcomed the visitors, Mr. Mitchell congratulated the Minister of Agriculture, and the Honourable Duncan Marshall, as was to be expected, was enthusiastic.

"Hon. Duncan Marshall," the Review continued, "could not conceal the real satisfaction which he was feeling in the splendid justification of the wisdom of the policy of his department. He was glad there were so many farmers and business men so interested in better agricultural education as to attend this opening. This was a new move in education and had been carried out in the face of much criticism and many objections. He had never lost his confidence in this method of education for the farmers' boys and girls. He knew that if a central agricultural college had been established, instead of 149 boys enrolling as in the case of the three schools, not 49 would have become students at a college in a central

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part. The class attending the Claresholm school was the largest initial class in any similar institution on the continent.

"Farmers of today desire to be up-to-date and as proof of this they have sent their boys, in such large numbers, to obtain the education which they themselves were denied. In five years there will not be three schools only but ten or a dozen. The object of these schools is not to educate the boy away from the farm but to educate him back to the farm. In his policy, he has the sympathy of every one of his colleagues and of the large majority of the members of the legislature. He would not depreciate the work in agricultural colleges, for indeed without these he would have been unable to secure the teachers necessary to carry out this plan for the education of the farmer's boy or girl. But the tendency of the college had been to train for the teaching of agriculture and thus take these students away from the farm. These schools are intensely practical. Associated as they are with the demonstration farms, the work of the instructors becomes less 'telling' and more 'showing'."

And at Olds, Duncan Marshall's own paper, the Olds Gazette, referred to the opening there as probably one of the best public gatherings that had been held in Olds for some time.

"The expression heard on every hand," the Gazette reported, "was that this was the kind of educational institution that was especially needed in an agricultural province like Alberta. The large assembly hall in the school building was seated with some 400 chairs for the public meeting in the evening and it was crowded to its capacity while a crowd stood on the stairway. The chair was occupied by Principal Elliott of the School, who discharged the duties in a very satisfactory manner."

Speakers included His Honour the Lieutenant Governor; the Honourable Frank Oliver; John Ross of the Department of Education; W. F. Puffer, M.P.P. for Lacombe; C. Weidenhammer, M.P.P. for Stony Plain; the Hon. J. R. Boyle, Minister of Education; John Blue, Provincial Librarian; Dr. H. M. Tory, and the Honourable Duncan Marshall.

"Dr. Tory," said the Gazette, "stated he had visited schools of agriculture in Denmark, Germany, and Austria and the schools

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erected in this province of Alberta were the equal of any he had seen in the world, and that the farmers' boys of this province had in these schools as good a chance in practical agriculture as had the farmers' boys in any country. He congratulated the Minister of Agriculture upon the untiring efforts that he had given to this work and it must be very gratifying indeed for him to witness the results in the splendid classes, of boys and girls that are now in attendance."

"The meeting was not only a large one but an enthusiastic one," the Gazette concluded, "and was a good deal in the nature of a celebration for the success already achieved by the School of Agriculture in the town of Olds."

THE SCHOOLS

And now the honeymoon is over; the schools are down to business. For the next fifteen years they had their ups and downs but in that period they established friendly relations and a well deserved reputation among the farmers and townspeople of the province.

This was the period of boarding out. The students stayed with people of the town and walked the mile or so to lectures and labs in the school. In some cases transportation was provided for the girls. The covered wagon at Vermilion remains a nostalgic memory.

Appeals were made to the townspeople through the local press. This message from Mr. Elliott to the people of Olds was made before the opening.

"It is encouraging to note that prospects for students in the Olds Agricultural School are exceeding bright. Of course the final number who decide to attend will be influenced considerably by the crops which are harvested, but so far as can be learned, at least from 20 to 30 students are expected to attend.

"Now as there is no dormitory provided as yet it will be necessary for these students to find board and lodging among the homes of Olds. Only a partial canvass revealed the fact that there are places for about ten to twelve students. We feel sure, however, that there must be more homes in the city where students might find accommodation for the six months' term, and should be grateful if those who have a spare room or who could give board would let the undersigned know.

"Then too there might be homes in town where there would be a certain number of chores to do, such as caring for a horse or cow or looking after a furnace, etc. We always find a certain number of students who wish to work all or part of their way through the school, and if such students could secure a room or room and board for doing such work, I am sure it would assist very materially."

And the following from an editorial in the Claresholm Review:

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"CAN ACCOMMODATE ALL — With the approach of the opening of the Claresholm agricultural school it is well to remove any lingering doubts that may have arisen in the minds of those who are considering attending the school, to the effect that Claresholm would not be able to accommodate, as far as room and board is concerned, the large class of students which are expected. We do not know how the matter may stand at Olds and Vermilion but we do know that the class attending the school here will be as large if not larger than that at either of the other two schools and that the townsfolk are rallying nobly to assure the accommodation required at reasonable rates.

"The letting of a room to a student is not considered a social lapse here and no student will be forced to go to the hotels. Further the same discipline that usually pertains to students attending colleges or schools will hold here. No frequenting of hotels and pool-rooms will be permitted and reports from the homes where students are domiciled will be asked in order to exercise a wholesome restraint upon the students who are away from their homes, perhaps for the first time. As far as this school is concerned its usefulness will not be seriously nor unnecessarily handicapped nor will its attendance be numerically restricted because of lack of homes for the students."

But there were handicaps, and these were met as they appeared. What happened at Vermilion is told by Dean E. A. Howes in the Vermilion School Yearbook for 1934-35.

"There was no Mechanics building at the start," he writes, "but importunity succeeded in securing a limited sum, beyond which we were told construction would cease. We secured the superintendence of a genuine carpenter, and the principal, three of the staff and some of the students succeeded in erecting the present buildings; of course the carpenter helped too. If any of the present day frequenters find evidences of jagged saw-cuts, poorly matched V-joint or ill-driven nails, the blame rests upon two members of the staff, names withheld for politic reasons." (That was the old mechanics building, now superseded by the spacious C.W.A.C. drill hall.)

Olds was the most fortunate of the schools of agriculture. It

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was centrally located, in a well settled, rich farming area, and experienced to a far less extent the struggle for existence of the other schools.

Under this struggle, Claresholm eventually succumbed, but Vermilion, undoubtedly due to a large extent to a faithful and enthusiastic alumni association, refused to stay down. Battle-scarred and weary, it rose again and again to fight on to ultimate victory.

This does not mean that the tradition and standing of even the Olds school of agriculture were established without hard work.

In spite of the minister's enthusiasm, many were still sceptical of the value of scientific training for the farmer. A great deal of credit is due to those early teaching staffs for their efforts in spreading the message of the schools.

Among the most energetic in this respect were W. J. Elliott and George Holeton. No opportunity was too small for them and no obstacle too large if it meant students for the school. Over the mud roads they travelled, talking to farmers, addressing meetings in the tiny schoolhouses, meeting groups of young people, and soliciting and obtaining assistance from their teachers. They kept in touch with old students and used them as contacts for new ones.

There are stories of Mr. Elliott pumping his way down the rails on an old tricycle hand-car — and as a former C.P.R. man this sounds feasible. He would drop off at the towns along the way, tell his story and move on.

Then there was his Model-T Ford, a rare vehicle in those days. Angus McKinnon, a student of that first class at Olds, tells how Mrs. Marshall, wife of the Honourable Duncan, was arriving at Olds for a visit to the school, and departing on a later train.

For some reason it was not possible for Mr. Elliott to meet her, so he asked the students if there were any among them who could drive a car. Among the 100 or so attending that winter (1914-15) there were only two who had that ability. One of them was Angus McKinnon. So one met the lady at the train and the other drove on her return.

The Model T Ford

That Model T Ford features in many tales of the early days of the schools.

On one occasion, Mrs. Elliott was giving a Red Cross dinner at Olds. Mrs. Marshall wanted to give a gallon of cream for the party and asked O. S. Longman, who was then teaching field husbandry at Olds, if he could drive out to the Marshall farm for it. It had been raining heavily and the roads were bad. He arrived at the farm without mishap, picked up the cream and put it in the corner.

Mrs. Marshall also had an old-fashioned wicker baby buggy on springs and wanted him to take this too. Longman put it in the back seat where on the muddy roads it soon began to flop around. He held it with one hand and drove with the other, keeping in the ruts as much as possible.

He also had a cake in a wicker basket, which he put on the floor of the car. Going through the mud holes the car door would swing open once in a while and he had to reach out and shut it. After one such struggle, he looked down on the floor and the cake was gone.

He picked out the buggy, stood it on the side of the road, turned the car around and started back. There was the wicker basket with the cake in it floating in the ditch. He fished it out with a pole, got back to the car and drove on to the school.

The finish came when, picking up the cream by the top, the top came off and the whole thing spilled.

Then there was the time down at Claresholm. Soon after Mr. Craig had received his appointment as deputy minister, Marshall and Craig were coming down to Claresholm and wanted to be driven to Medicine Hat. O. S. Longman had just overhauled and painted the car, a job of which he was naturally proud.

"I picked up Duncan's grip and started for the car," he relates. "As soon as we reached it Duncan said 'Will this thing run.' 'I hope so,' I said. 'You jump in the back, Longman, and I'll drive,' was the rejoinder. And off we went to Medicine Hat."

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About **Duncan Marshall**, Dr. Longman (in an unpublished family history) writes:

"At Olds we saw much of the Honourable Duncan Marshall. Olds was located in his constituency, and he had a sizable farm north-east of Olds, and a herd of purebred Shorthorn cattle; also he owned or had an interest in the local paper, the Olds Gazette. While he had to spend much time in Edmonton, the Olds farm was really his home, and where Mrs. Marshall and the family lived.

"Mr. Marshall's interest in livestock was almost an obsession. He visited the noted livestock breeders of Scotland and England, and his knowledge of pedigrees of the noted sires and dams of the breeds was amazing.

"The Honourable Duncan Marshall was a fluent and convincing speaker, and he enjoyed speaking to farmers and about agriculture as a way of life. It was 34 years later, while I was attending the Royal Agricultural Show, then being held at Oxford, England, I met the president of the Chicago International Hay and Grain Show. When he learned that I was from the Department of Agriculture in Alberta, Canada, he remarked 'During all the years I have been associated with the Chicago Show I can only recall one person coming from that province and he was the greatest orator I ever heard, but for the life of me I can't recall his name.' 'Was it Duncan Marshall?' I said. 'That's the name,' he replied, giving me a slap on the shoulder, then proceeded to eulogize Mr. Marshall and his address.

"I was quite aware of this address," Dr. Longman continues. "It was given before the Saddle and Sirloin Club during the 1916 Chicago Show, when Honourable Mr. Marshall was made a member of the club, one of the greatest honours in the United States that can be bestowed on an agriculturist. It was Mr. Marshall's custom to see to it that two or three of the department officials attended the Toronto Royal or the International each year, purely for its educational value, consequently a number of our officials heard the address. On their return they related the event and extolled his address. They agreed that 'Duncan' as we called him was at his best."

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Before the schools met for their second session, war had been declared, and many young men were enlisting.

In spite of that, attendance held up well. The first three sessions showed Olds with attendances of 104, 119 and 161 students; Claresholm with 86, 105 and 117; and Vermilion with 55, 55 and 58. But over the years attendance varied widely.

Always at Olds a fair attendance could be depended upon. The highest to 1941 was 265 for the 1927-28 session and the lowest 104 for the first session. In the full period of its existence Claresholm's highest attendance was 117 in 1915-16 and the lowest 41 in 1930-31 — its final year. Attendance at Vermilion fluctuated from 35 in 1920-21 to 211 in 1928-29.

Olds continued to function from its inception with the exception of 1918-19 when all three schools were turned into hospitals during the 'flu epidemic' and the staff called on to tend the sick.

Vermilion was closed again for the 1923-24 term, for the 1933-34 session and again in 1941 until its opening in 1945. For the early part of this period it was occupied by the Canadian Womens Army Corps, and changed in both function and appearance. One result of this change was the magnificent drill hall that was turned over at the end of the war by the Department of National Defence to the Province of Alberta, and later used as a mechanics building for the school.

With the end of the first world war, the Honourable Duncan Marshall decided that the time had come for realization of his dream of expansion and three new schools were opened. These were at Raymond, Youngstown and Gleichen.

Then, in 1921, a change occurred. The U.F.A. government was elected and Marshall's term of office ended. In 1922, after two years, with attendance at each of under 50, Youngstown and Gleichen were closed permanently. Raymond continued for another year and was then closed. It was re-opened for the 1926-27 term and continued until 1930-31. In that year, as a result of the depression, both Raymond and Claresholm ceased to exist as schools of agriculture, and were never re-opened.

STUDENTS

Why did students attend the schools? Some went to increase their general knowledge, some to learn more about the vocation of farming, and others considered the schools a step to higher learning.

Dr. J. G. Taggart, the first instructor in Animal Science at Vermilion and later principal of the school, recalls that there were two groups of students in those early days. They were pioneering days and many of the students had been unable to continue their formal education. Among them were mature men, some of them older than their instructors, but through these schools they were given another chance.

To some it meant a better knowledge of the job they were doing. To others, it led to careers in scientific and administrative fields in agriculture—careers that would have been closed without this new opportunity of furthering their education.

Fred Bell, a member of that first class at Vermilion, was raised on a farm at Islay. "From Methodist students who boarded at our place," he says, "I got the idea that I would like to go back to school again. When the agricultural school at Vermilion opened, it opened the door for me."

He tells how disappointed he and Clarence Barr were when, shortly before graduation, they were told they would not receive diplomas. It was hard to understand, since they were both of the opinion that they had passed with flying colours.

Their anxiety was relieved, however, when they learned that it was only because their diplomas had been spoiled in preparation. There wasn't time to get more before the ceremony, so Barr and Bell received rolls of paper and the diplomas were forwarded later.

Olds graduate Bill Jacobson tells of a similar urge for higher learning. "I was a farm boy and realized that I had to get education if I was going to do anything. When I heard of Olds, I said to myself, 'That's the answer'."

He tells how in those days, the two things that were never

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tolerated at Olds were liquor and laziness. Of Dr. Taggart, he says, "Mr. Taggart was our science teacher at that time, but used to talk to us after school. He spoke of Ludwig and the soil, and of the early discoveries in the field of agricultural science. He had the scientific approach to everything."

W. L. Jacobson went on to the University of Alberta from which he graduated in 1920. He became interested in irrigation and was long associated with the Canada Department of Agriculture Experimental Farm at Lethbridge.

A Claresholm student was Dr. W. H. Cook, Director of the Division of Applied Biology of the National Research Council in Ottawa. Of his work as a student the Claresholm School of Agriculture Yearbook of 1922 says "William promises to become one of our great agriculturists"; a prophesy that was amply fulfilled.

Bill Cook went on to university, took a master's degree in biochemistry, proceeded to his Ph.D. and to work under Dr. Tory in the National Research Council. While at Claresholm he assisted the principal, Mr. Hooper, with legume cultures during the summer, and became involved also in school fairs and grasshopper control.

Dr. L. P. V. Johnson, Professor of Genetics at the University of Alberta, graduated from the Claresholm School of Agriculture in 1927.

"For me," he said, "the school of agriculture was a stepping stone to the university. Most of the boys had gone as far as Grade VIII; and a high school education for boys on the farm was something of a luxury in those days. A few years later, parents would encourage them to go back to school. The schools of agriculture proved attractive since courses were held in the winter months and they were able there to meet young adults of their own age."

But it was not all study, and memory goes back from time to time to incidents that were not always in the line of duty.

There was the story of the homemade wine; innocuous saskatoon juice it was thought—left over from the many quarts of saskatoons that had been canned that year.

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There was no dormitory for the boys at Claresholm and it was suggested that L.P.V. might like to take one or two bottles of the juice back to his boarding place for a little drink in the evenings.

He packed these in his suitcase and since the boarding house with its two rooms of boys and one of girls didn't seem a good place to keep them, he removed the crocks to his locker in the chemistry lab. One day he passed the word around that there would be drinks on the house in the lab. that evening.

The juice was served in beakers, and since it proved to be fermented and the beakers were somewhat large, the taciturn became talkative and a merry time was experienced. One of the guests (who was seldom known to speak, even in class) dropped his inhibitions to the extent of dancing a hornpipe and turning storyteller. After that he reverted to form and again became silent.

Graduates of the Vermilion School include Arnold Platt, who developed the sawfly-resistant Rescue wheat, served as President of the Farmers Union of Alberta and on the Board of Governors of the University, and was active on many committees and commissions in the cause of agriculture; W. H. T. Mead, Livestock Commissioner for the Alberta Department of Agriculture; Orlan Bratvold, Alberta Supervisor of Crop Improvement; Dr. B. C. Jenkins, Plant Science Research Professor at the University of Manitoba; Dr. W. T. Andrew, Professor of Horticulture at the University of Alberta (and son of J. F. Andrew, who was livestock instructor at Vermilion and later Alberta's Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture); Dr. Kenneth Prior, agricultural missionary in Africa for many years; and the Right Reverend Godfrey P. Gower, Bishop of New Westminster.

Of interest as an example of the newness of the country in the early days of the schools is the fact that of 21 graduates from Vermilion in 1917 only two were born in Alberta.

The A.S.A. Magazine for that year records that seven had their birthplaces in the United States, five in Ontario, three in England, and one in each of Quebec, Scotland, India and Poland.

The Alberta born graduates were Stanley Hall, who was born

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in South Edmonton, and Allan L. Gibson, whose birthplace was Namao.

From Olds came Dr. H. R. Thornton, retired Head of the Department of Dairying at the University of Alberta; Dr. G. B. Sanford, Head of the Canada Department Laboratory of Plant Pathology in Edmonton for many years; Dr. C. K. Johns, Head of the Division of Bacteriology and Dairy Research, Canada Department of Agriculture; Dr. Andrew Cairns, authority on grain marketing; L. B. Thomson, Superintendent of the Canada Department of Agriculture Experimental Farm at Swift Current, and later Director of Prairie Farm Rehabilitation; T. P. Devlin, well-known horse judge and Director of Colonization and Agriculture for the C.N.R. at Winnipeg; Miss Helen Moseson, Professor of the School of Home Economics at the University of Alberta; and Miss Sheila Marryat, prominent in the early days of C.K.U.A. and with the C.B.C. in Winnipeg.

Dr. E. W. Stringam, Head of the Department of Animal Science at the University of Manitoba, graduated in 1937 from the 2-in-1 class at Olds. This was a one-year course for students with Grade XI standing. The agriculture or home economics subjects of the two years were compressed into one year and the student was able to graduate with a diploma at the end of that year.

Dr. Stringam's brother and sister had been to the Raymond school and his eldest brother through Claresholm. When he attended, the depression years were still with us and he was not greatly impressed with the farming picture presented.

He liked the Olds school, however, and decided to go on; but it was not until he took his Master's degree that he had any idea of going into professional agriculture.

He looks back on those days with a great deal of pleasure. There was an excellently organized social life, with good discipline and good control. One of the things that impressed him was the great interest in the students of people like Mr. Murray. "Mr. Murray," he says, "had just the right amount of dignity, discipline and academic bearing, and yet a friendliness that appealed."

One of the finest instructors, he tells us, was Charlie Yauch.

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"I never had anyone (and I've had some excellent teachers) who could explain chemistry so well to one who had never had chemistry before."

Hugh McPhail, he recalls, was extremely interested in the students. "He was the first man I knew who could really tell us what government was about, and explain to us simply the aims and purposes of farm organizations."

Dr. Stringam remembers Walter Benn for his activities in the drama, Fred Parkinson as coach of the football team, Arthur Kemp for his knowledge of field crops and botany and his keen interest in the students, Ed Phillips as an excellent Dean, and George Holeton as a very kind old gentleman and a patient and meticulous instructor. Mr. Malyon, Miss Gordon and Mrs. Dunstan also feature pleasantly in those memories.

Among his fellow students he recalls Ed. McCarty, who later went into the priesthood; Raymond Skaret, Larry Williams, Bryce Stringam, Don McPherson, Neil Bosomworth, Sherman Yelland, Harry Leggett, Bill Holmes and Ernie McWilliams. Many of these went on to the University and became prominent in various fields of agricultural activity.

Another Olds graduate of note is Dr. J. Ansel Anderson, who in 1963 became Director General of the Research Branch of the Canada Department of Agriculture in Ottawa. From England, he arrived in Canada in 1922 to farm, took the 2-in-1 course at the Olds School of Agriculture from which he graduated in 1923, went on to take his degree in Agriculture at the University of Alberta and proceeded to his Master's and Doctor's degrees. Dr. Anderson is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the Agricultural Institute of Canada, and the Chemical Institute of Canada. In 1957, he was awarded the Osborne medal by the American Association of Cereal Chemists for research—the first time this award had been made outside the United States.

Among his classmates at Olds were J. M. Manson who was for many years Biology editor for the Canadian Journal of Research, and who before his retirement in 1961 had long been engaged in scientific liaison work between the United States, the United King-

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dom and Canada; E. W. Brunsden of Brooks, who was Member of Parliament for his constituency 1958-62; H. E. Craig, formerly with the Federal Livestock Branch and now retired to his farm at Namao; R. E. English, Statistician with the Alberta Department of Agriculture; and Ole Ellehill who for many years has farmed in Argentina, and who later sent up his son Jamie to graduate from the school in 1957.

Many were the ways that brought students to the schools, and an experience worth recording is that of Vermilion graduate Ken Prior.

Dr. Kenneth Prior, who was at Vermilion in 1922-23 as a 2-in-1 student spent much of his life as an agricultural missionary in Africa. He tells how at an early age he came from England with his parents to a farm in Ontario. He worked with neighbouring farmers and agriculture appealed strongly to him.

After working on farms for five years he felt a call to mission work, and the local Baptist minister suggested that Prior attend the Toronto Bible College. Following a term at the college he served in the mission field in Saskatchewan and British Columbia and was then asked by the Congregational Church to go to Africa as an agricultural missionary. Receiving approval of the Mission Board for a college course in agriculture, he attended the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph for a term. But with little opportunity for earlier academic education he found the going hard.

From there he came west again to a mission field at Grande Prairie. There he met F. B. Dixon, whom many students at both Vermilion and Olds remember for his excellent teaching ability and kindly encouragement. Dixon was then Principal of the high school in Grande Prairie and he persuaded Prior to return and continue his education. That winter Prior lived in a modest shack, studied Grade IX, and kept five preaching places open all winter. He rode horseback and preached at three places one Sunday and two places the next.

With this start he called at Alberta College in Edmonton with the idea of taking Grades X and XI in one year. But it was suggested instead that he go to one of the schools of agriculture and

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thus obtain entrance into the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta.

On arriving at Vermilion, he was surprised and pleased to find as Principal a former Guelph acquaintance. Mr. Gandier had been assistant professor of chemistry at Guelph at the time Prior was there. Arrangements were made for Prior to register as a 2-in-1 student and he carried on from there to the University of Alberta and proceeded to mission work in Africa.

Much of his work on that continent was agricultural and his training in Alberta proved extremely useful. Different methods of cultivation were tried and some machinery was introduced. Local crops were tested against imported varieties; plants and trees were distributed; and livestock improvement, involving rabbits, poultry, pigs, oxen, sheep and goats, was undertaken.

Now residing in Victoria, B.C., Dr. Prior has in recent years served as Field Secretary of the United Church Mission Board.

Back again to that first class at Olds, we think of Dr. R. D. Sinclair, who became animal science instructor and later Dean of Agriculture at the University of Alberta. He was a member of the first class at Olds and a graduate of 1915. A man of learning and understanding, he was a friend to all his students.

We learn from a report of the Agricultural Instruction Act in 1915 that closing of the first term at the Olds school "was signalized by a social gathering at which scholarships (presented by P. Burns, the well-known packer at Calgary), were given for the best practical work in stock judging, grain judging, weed seed identification, carpentry, and blacksmithing. **Robert Sinclair**, of Innisfail, won first place and thirty dollars in gold, and **Thomas Sigurdson**, of Burnt Lake, second with twenty dollars in gold." Tom Sigurdson was a prime mover in the Olds Alumni Association. He was President for many years and a strong activating force.

Then there were students who themselves became instructors at the schools. Among them were B. J. Whitbread, J. T. Eaglesham, W. G. Malaher, J. P. Ficht, W. J. Edgar, Campbell McBeath, Arthur Kemp, Miss Helen Moseson, Miss Jesse Goodall, Jack Kerns, Buck

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Godwin, Lloyd Seath, Ed Phillips, Ev. McCrimmon and many others. Included are the present principals at Olds and Vermilion, J. E. Birdsall and W. S. Baranyk. Their knowledge of school values and traditions and their experience as students proved invaluable when they took their places on the staff.

We have spoken of students who left the farm—and there were many of them throughout the schools' history. They were needed if agriculture was to progress, and they made a contribution that would have been difficult or impossible if it had not been for their early opportunities at Alberta's Schools of Agriculture.

But it was training for a return to the farm that Duncan Marshall had particularly in mind when he initiated the schools. And the men and women who returned to the farm were legion. Not only did they become excellent farmers and homemakers, but many of them as a result of that early training were able and qualified to take part in community affairs and act as leaders in their areas.

It is difficult to mention names in this connection; there are so many of them. But one thinks as examples of the McKinnons, the Barrs, George Chattaway, Ed Davidson, Lyle Robinson, Peter Wyllie, Herbert Spencer, and others who have made names for themselves as farmers, livestockmen and leaders in their communities. School of Agriculture graduates Jesse Cole, E. R. Lewis, John Rozmahel and Ken and Doug Burns are among those having received the Alberta Master Farm Family award in recent years.

All look back with pleasure to those days at the schools of agriculture—the studies, the out-of-class activities, and the associations that have carried on down the years.

Whether half a decade or half a century has passed since graduation, the story is the same. Students from 1913 to 1963 speak with one accord about the happy days they spent at one of Alberta's schools of agriculture.

"The Vermilion School of Agriculture was a place of good fellowship, learning, playing, and an organized social life," said 1960 graduate Hartmann Nagel. Another alumnus of the same year, Laurie Ann Campbell, remarked, "I can't help but feel that

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if one really wants to acquire a well rounded education, V.S.A. provides the finest of teachers." These feelings of mutual goodwill are recorded at all the schools.

Throughout the history of the schools this spirit of loyalty and affection has continued. Times and ideas changed but traditions of the schools remained. Students and staff lived and worked together. They were learning the approach not only to agriculture or home economics, but to life itself.

No gathering of young people considers self improvement the whole scheme of life. Thrown together under similar circumstances, friendships are formed and relaxations devised. Qualities of leadership emerge, and in a surprisingly short time these young people are living together in a joyous and healthful working companionship.

Education for farming and homemaking was the primary consideration of the teachers and most of the students. But it didn't stop there. Why, throughout the whole period of the schools, staffs of such excellence and with such an understanding of the problems and ambitions of the students were obtainable is not easily accounted for.

Mrs. Gandier tells about coming home one day at Vermilion, and finding several boys in the dining room. Her silver was laid out on the table and Mr. Gandier was going over the articles piece by piece explaining their use. This had arisen from a question from one of the boys as to the use of a certain spoon and its position in the table setting. Is it any wonder that these students thought of their instructors with respect and affection?

They speak of Mr. Holeton's kindness; of Mr. Elliott's faculty of always looking for the best in one; of Mr. Taggart's and Mr. Hopkins' out-of-class talks on the meaning of science and the philosophy of life; of Mr. Grisdale's pride in his students, Mr. Murray's sense of proportion, Mr. Malaher's gift of imparting an appreciation of books, and Mr. Dixon's fine teaching qualities.

They tell also of the help received from people like Miss Hotten, Miss Lavallee, Miss McIntyre, Miss Storey and Miss Shaw. No instructor passed through the schools without leaving fond memories

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with at least some of the students. The deans of both men and women are remembered with gratitude. They may have seemed strict at times but no charge of unfairness was levelled, and they had the knack of looking the other way on occasion.

The little day to day kindnesses, often unconsciously applied, left a warmth in the hearts of the students that remained through the years.

But let the students tell it! Here is what Einar Stephenson, a student in the 1913 class at Olds, tells in the Olds Alumni Review for June 1963:

“Like most of my contemporaries I was raised in rusticity with only five or six short years of schooling. I am very thankful that we had such a very competent staff. Their patience and sympathetic understanding was amazing. It was as if they had an invisible high pressure pump pumping us full of enthusiasm for the challenge and love of the land. They lit the lamp of knowledge regarding the science of living and growing things. It is true that at first the flame was not very big, but as we went back to live with the land, and almost became a part of it, it grew brighter and finally illuminated our road of life which led to contentment and security.”

Monica (Goddard) Wolff, a 1938 graduate, asks in the same issue:

“What is that intangible something that gives the O.S.A. graduate that lifelong nostalgic emotion and that instant glow of camaraderie with any other graduate—above all, a fellow classmate?”

“Even after twenty-five eventful years, it seems so simple to draw back the curtain and again feel oneself racing down the stairs to the dining room in order not to find oneself in the server’s chair, and dashing to look at the Sunday list to see who else is going to be at the table for the next week—your girlish heart pounding until you know whether one’s latest crush is or is not to be at your table or at the table of your rival.”

And finally, George N. Crampton of the class of 1947 says:

“When I was a youngster I had not the privilege of going to

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school as kids nowadays have—I had to stay out and work on the farm. By the time I was twelve or thirteen I had to give up school in the summertime, and thus it took two years to get a grade by attending only in the winter. The young man who was teaching our little country school during the years I struggled through grades eight and nine fired me with the ambition to go to Agricultural College; the big thing about that, of course, being the winter term, with freedom to keep on with the farming during the summer. This ambition I clung to fiercely through my teens, encouraged always by the young teacher, whose interest in me did not seem to lessen, though he had, by this time, moved to University. Times were hard, my father's farm demanded all my time, and I finally saw that there was no hope of going to Olds. I married, and settled down to the business of making a living and raising my family. I had seen my thirty-sixth birthday when, one day, in talking to the teacher, who was now Field Crops Commissioner, I remarked that my greatest regret still was that I had not been able to go to Olds; and Mr. Wilson replied:

“Then don't regret it any longer. Your farm is a success—your family is all in school—your wife could go back to teaching—and you could go to Olds this fall!”

“That was the most revolutionary idea I had ever heard, but I went to Olds that fall. And I had the best two years of my life.”

He concluded: “Our son and our daughter attended Agricultural College—though it had to be Vermilion—and indeed, our daughter met her future husband there, and many are the good old talks we have about Olds and Vermilion. I hope my influence has sent other young people to these fine schools, of which I am so justly proud.”

When we think of the thousands of young people who have passed through Alberta's Schools of Agriculture it is impossible to mention them all. But it is with a feeling of gratitude that we think of the Honourable Duncan Marshall and his associates, together with those who followed, for the opportunity offered and the great good that was done, not only to Albertans but to Canadian agriculture through their foresight and efforts.

STAFF

Changes in staff were not long coming. The first move was when E. A. Howes was appointed Dean of the new Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta.

In the spring of 1915 it was learned in Vermilion that he was leaving and his friends gathered to wish him well. When Mr. and Mrs. Howes were out visiting one evening they received a phone call: "Come home at once; the baby's crying."

Arriving home, they found the house packed with around 40 welcoming friends. A surprise party was in progress and when things settled down a little, a presentation was made to Mr. and Mrs. Howes and an address of appreciation read by the mayor, Mr. W. J. Seed.

Appointed in his stead was F. S. Grisdale who had spent the previous two years as instructor of field husbandry at Olds. At Vermilion he remained until 1919 when he returned to Olds and continued there as principal until 1930, when he became M.L.A. in the U.F.A. government and in 1934 was appointed Minister of Agriculture.

It was while he was principal at Olds that word went around that a little betting was going on in one of the boarding houses. It seems that L. B. Thompson and one or two other students were staying at a house used also as a maternity home. The ladies-in-waiting from the surrounding country would stay there on occasion.

Mr. Grisdale tells how it came to his attention one day that these boys were running a sweepstake. The betting would run on the date of birth, whether the new arrival would be a boy or a girl, and whether it would be dark or fair.

For Mr. Grisdale, his students had a tremendous regard. They respected him as an agriculturist, teacher and administrator, and enjoyed his friendliness and sense of humour.

Jack Kerns, a 1928 graduate of Olds, tells of a friendly dispute between Mr. Grisdale and another student, Humphrey Gratz. It

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was at the time that Garnet wheat was becoming popular. Gratz and Grisdale had been arguing back and forth as to which owed the other a dollar on a hockey game.

Mr. Grisdale, who had acquired a farm in the Olds district in the early years, was one of the first to grow Garnet there. He sold Gratz some of this wheat for spring seeding—two hundred bushels of wheat at a dollar a bushel, the story goes.

Back came a cheque for \$199 with a letter of thanks from Gratz and a note that he had deducted the dollar owed to him for the hockey game.

Grisdale replied promptly, saying that he knew that Gratz would deduct the dollar so had sent him only 199 bushels.

When Mr. Grisdale moved to Vermilion, he was replaced at Olds by O. S. Longman. Mr. Longman had not been too happy as farm mechanics instructor at Claresholm since he was much more interested in agronomy. During the summer of 1914 he indicated to the Honourable Duncan Marshall that if any openings occurred in field husbandry at the schools he would be interested. When this opportunity arose he accepted willingly.

“At Olds,” he says, “I taught field husbandry, and supervised the field experimental plots of which there were several acres. These responsibilities provided almost full time work at the school. The student enrollment at Olds was larger than at Claresholm. Here I became associated with W. J. Elliott, the principal and a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, also J. Gordon Taggart, the science instructor, who was a graduate of the O.A.C. and had been an agricultural county agent in eastern Ontario, also was animal husbandry instructor at the Vermilion school the two years previous; therefore we were both new arrivals at Olds. Taggart later became superintendent of the newly established Dominion Experimental Farm at Swift Current, Saskatchewan, the Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan and finally Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Canada.

“There was also George Holeton, instructor in carpentry and

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who became widely known throughout central Alberta in the promotion of school fairs."

Another well known figure at Vermilion was E. S. Hopkins. He was a graduate of the University of Toronto and a man with a keen analytical mind.

From 1913 to 1918 he taught science at the Vermilion school. On its closing for the 'flu year he remained for two years with the Alberta Department of Agriculture in charge of soil investigation. Moving then to the Federal field he became eventually Director of the Experimental Farm Service for the Dominion Department of Agriculture.

Fred Bell speaks of him as a good scientist and a great baseball player. He got along well with the students, but in the beginning would have weeded out some of the boys.

Taggart said "No! These boys need an education." Hopkins and Taggart had been classmates. Both were agricultural representatives in the east and came out together.

Staff members came and went, although many remained on the staff of the schools for years. Year after year they saw fresh crops of students arrive, some of whom they had met during the summer work and greeted as old acquaintances.

Students didn't just drift into the schools. A great deal of hard work and canvassing was needed on the part of the staffs to make the schools known and advertise their purpose.

Walter Benn, on the staff of four of the schools at various times speaks of his experiences at Vermilion.

In those early days, he says, one problem was to make the work of the schools known and to encourage farm boys and girls to attend. Later, every student became an enthusiastic salesman, but for the first few years the going was hard.

Staff members in the summer, engaged in extension throughout their districts, lost no opportunity of stressing the value of the schools and the part returning students could play in home and community life.

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Dr. P. R. Talbot, for many years provincial veterinarian, loved to tell the story of how he alighted one day from the train at Bellis. Seeing a crowd in the near distance he asked what it was all about.

"It's Mr. Benn," he was told. "He's preaching."

That was in 1921. For two years the Vermilion school had been closed to regular classes. In the winter of 1918-19 the Spanish 'flu was raging. For 1919-20, a course for veterans only was conducted. In 1920-21 registration at Vermilion was low.

In 1921, if the school was to survive, a drive for students was essential. On the staff that year was Walter Scott Benn. Transferred from the school at Raymond, he was charged with the task of arousing interest in the course.

After church, or wherever people met, he would start to talk. Conversationally at first, but as others gathered around he would often find himself addressing a small crowd. It was one of these occasions to which Dr. Talbot referred.

From farm to farm Mr. Benn travelled that summer telling of the schools and their advantages. Many of his listeners were of German or Ukrainian origin; and there was some suspicion of the white-collared approach to farming and of officialdom in general.

Earlier, he had taught school at Bruderheim, and had there made acquaintance of many German families of the district. His first call in search of students for Vermilion was on the father of two boys he had taught at Bruderheim. Warm was the welcome and the talk soon turned to education for agriculture. "You can't teach my boys anything about farming," was the good-humoured comment. A little persuasion, however, convinced him to the contrary and his two boys were the first to be signed up. So delighted were the parents with progress made and with the practical nature of the course that in the year following the daughter also attended.

"My boys came home and taught me to weld," said the father. "My daughter from that school learned to make cheese. —And now she's showing the neighbours," he added proudly.

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No wonder that ex-students were eager to pass on the benefits of the schools and to encourage others to attend.

"It was not only what they learned," said Morley Malyon, poultry instructor at the Olds school for many years. "The difference in bearing of those boys and girls between their entering and leaving the school was amazing."

"We must remember," he said, "that the opportunities of today were lacking. Distances were long and interests centred chiefly in the home."

Junior activities and 4-H clubs were in the future and associations of young people were few. Social improvement fostered by the schools was invaluable—dress and poise in the girls; self confidence and self expression in the boys. On their return to the farm these attributes stood them in good stead, and in councils, co-operatives and community life they took an active part.

Something of the loyalty and spirit of responsibility of the staff can be gleaned from a letter from Deputy Minister Craig to the Honourable George Hoadley on March 16, 1934.

1934 was a trying year. It was in the midst of the depression, when many were unemployed and relief was widespread. Measures to reduce government spending were everywhere sought and it is not surprising that the schools of agriculture came under observation.

"Could we cut down the staff at Olds?" was the query; and here in part was Deputy Minister Craig's report:

"I have a fairly close contact with the School, visiting it several times during each session, and I am thoroughly convinced that each full time member of the staff is working to capacity, and from my knowledge of other Institutions of this kind, I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the staff in general is covering more work than is usually covered at such places.

"The handling of a resident school is entirely different from handling a public or high school, where students come at 9 a.m. and leave at 4 p.m. In a resident school the staff is responsible for the students for twenty-four hours of the day.

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"I may give one illustration of the economy which has been effected at the Olds School this year. Mr. D. A. Andrew, who has a very heavy teaching course in Animal Husbandry and Farm Management, also acted as Dean of the Residence until Christmas. I went to him personally and asked him to do this in the interests of economy, which he readily agreed to; performing his duties, it was necessary for him to live at the School night and day, notwithstanding the fact that his wife and children lived in an apartment over town; he was only able to go home once a day for an hour or so.

"Mr. Malyon, the Instructor in Dairying, Poultry and Physical Training, is handling this position during the present term. He also has a family living in the town."

And this is not an isolated case. Anyone who has attended one of the schools of agriculture can vouch for the devotion to duty of members of the staff. They were there early and late, and ever ready to help and advise. They took their places as counsellors to the various school clubs, attending meetings and guiding unobtrusively where required. They were present at the social events; and in the gym and library, in dramatics and sports activities, they contributed unselfishly to the community life of the schools.

SUMMER WORK

The task of obtaining students for the schools of agriculture was incidental to other work of the staff during the summer. The functions of the schools were not only to give instruction to students during the winter; but to carry on extension work with farmers in summer, and to conduct experiments in the science of agriculture.

In the Annual Report of the Alberta Department of Agriculture for 1916 we learn that:

"The Department of Agriculture created this year a new division known as the District Agents. The function of this division is to conduct extension work in several districts throughout the province. Agents were located at five places; at the three Schools of Agriculture, Claresholm, Olds and Vermilion and at Sedgewick and Stony Plain. The agents were secured from the staffs of the Schools of Agriculture: J. W. Scott was located at Claresholm, Principal W. J. Elliott at Olds, G. L. Shanks at Vermilion, J. G. Taggart at Sedgewick, and H. H. McIntyre at Stony Plain. The men carried on their work from April to October."

It was from the schools then, that the first Alberta District Agriculturists were chosen.

Mr. G. L. Shanks was of course one of the old-timers already mentioned—a Manitoba Agricultural College graduate and the first farm mechanics instructor at Vermilion. He well remembers H. H. McIntyre. "Herb McIntyre," he says, "came to Vermilion when Taggart left. That was the first year of staff changes at Vermilion. McIntyre was a livestock man and went to Stony Plain on extension work."

Experimental work was another feature of the schools. The 1916 Annual Report mentions the gradual development of the experimental function of the schools' activities, and points out that an instructor who has made no experiments is unable to come before a class or address a farmers' meeting with the same enthusiasm and the same confidence as the instructor who has done the work himself. Nearly all data on farming have been collected at Eastern

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Canada and American agricultural colleges, the report noted, and some of this material is not applicable to Alberta.

Olds reports in the same year: "It is generally understood that the agronomist at each school conducts certain experimental work with grains, grasses, etc., in order to study the peculiar conditions of each locality. Mr. Longman continued the work that had been undertaken by Mr. Grisdale at this school. The first line of work was the finding of varieties of grains and grasses that were best suited to the district. To secure these data, rather extensive experiments were undertaken with regard to the various varieties of wheat, oats, and barley, together with the grass crops and we hope that we will soon be able to report fairly definitely with regard to some of these crops. It will be appreciated, of course, that one, two or even three years' work is not to be thoroughly relied upon and records of this kind only become authentic when a large number of years proves the results to be correct.

"Cultural methods is another line of experiment in the agronomy division. These cultural plots have been undertaken with a view to studying our new soils and if possible to find the best methods of handling them.

"A third line of work undertaken has been that with grass and legume crops. While the Olds district is very well adapted to the growing of timothy, yet so far very little is known with regard to what other grasses and legumes will do on the land. A large number of plots of the various kinds of grasses have been grown and will be reported on from time to time. In addition, considerable work has been done with garden crops which include all classes of vegetables, and tests have also been made with various varieties of turuips an mangolds. The same may be said with regard to these latter as was said with regard to the cereals. It is certainly not wise to report on the adaptability of crops to a district until a sufficient number of years have proved that our opinion is fairly correct."

It was in keeping with this tradition that Mr. Murray in 1932 started selection of what was to become the Olds variety of creeping

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red fescue. The original seed was obtained from Czechoslovakia in 1931 by George H. Clark, former Seed Commissioner for Canada. The Olds variety became widely grown and filled a useful place in lawns and pastures.

Then there were the School Fairs. Dr. Taggart talks about them. He speaks of going out to Sedgewick for the summer as one of the first ag. reps. in the province. "That summer we started school fair work—Hopkins and I," he recalls. "Hopkins went to Edmonton as assistant to Mr. Craig. He looked after the School Fairs Act and people running the fairs.

"There were two school fairs that year; one at Argyle school near Alliance and the other at Merna school, 15 or 16 miles south of Sedgewick. These were probably the first school fairs held in Alberta."

THE SCHOOL FAIRS

In 1916, with the school fairs becoming established, Vermilion, Olds and Claresholm all reported successful events. They were held at or near the schools of agriculture and an idea of their operation is gleaned from the Vermilion school report of that year.

"As an additional part of our extension work," reports Principal Grisdale, "a rural school fair was organized with the object of interesting in agriculture all children of school age within a radius of twenty miles of Vermilion.

"To this end nineteen schools were visited early in May and a short address given setting forth the details of the plan for the School Fair and also pointing out to the pupils the advantages of holding a Fair. Each pupil was offered certain vegetable seeds, potatoes or flower seeds and a limited number of settings of eggs (six) were also offered in each school district."

Organization and distribution of seed, potatoes and eggs was done in April and May and a distance of over 600 miles travelled. Then in August, each pupil was visited, his garden plot inspected, and a prize of \$1.50 given in each school district to the boy or girl with the best kept plot.

On September 15, the school fair was held on the Fair Grounds at Vermilion, with some 600 exhibits in one of the large tents bought earlier by Duncan Marshall for his farm short courses.

"Considered in the nature of an experiment," Mr. Grisdale stated, "the interest aroused in the children and their parents has more than justified the time and expense which were devoted to the organization and direction of the School Fair."

As well as eggs and garden produce, Principal Elliott of the Olds school mentions that the boys and girls were to raise calves and colts for the fair; and for the household science end of the work a considerable amount of sewing and baking was to be exhibited. A fair was held in the fall, he reports, which was distinctly a boys' and girls' fair where the vegetables, flowers, cooking, baking, live stock, etc., were exhibited.

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These school fairs proved extremely popular and continued away into the 1940's. But instead of holding one large fair at the schools of agriculture, separate fairs were later held at central points in the various school zones.

W. G. Malaher, who was associated for many years with the school fairs from Vermilion speaks of their organization in the 1920's and 30's. He speaks of Carl Heckbert, who was made supervisor for the region, as being very active in organizing the school fairs and making several innovations.

First thing in the spring, said W. G. M., was distribution of the seed. This was the first job for the staff as soon as classes were over and the papers had been marked.

Mr. Elliott would take charge. We'd go into the laundry room; and there would be big tubs of seeds, with paper bags and scoops of various sizes.

We'd have a list of schools, and the small bags of seed for each school would go into one big bag. All these had to be out by May 15.

Once the seeds were out, trips into the country had to be organized. The schools were visited and talks given as to what was expected of the exhibitors.

The first Fords were what we started with, he said. Then we graduated to the 1926 Fords. For school fair work we also used some of the government Dodge cars.

Mr. Malaher remembers calling with Miss Shaw at the McLeod Valley school in the Sangudo area. There was no obvious trail, but rather than leave the car below he decided to drive to the top of the hill where the school was. When they arrived, the whole school had turned out to see what was happening. No car had attempted that trackless hill before.

At the fairs, he said, it was interesting to see how the same family took prizes for the same type of exhibit year after year. The number of prizes depended on the number of entries. There might be three or four prizes, but in a heavy class there could be as many

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as ten. Often out of the top ten there would be three or four in the same family.

The vegetables and flowers were the heavy classes, he recalls. There might be 100 to 125 cabbages to judge in one class.

As well as garden and farm field produce, there was the popular handiwork class of bird houses and other manual art work. There were classes for butter, eggs and the sheaves of grain, and the outside work of poultry, calves, horses and hogs. All these were open classes.

For the girls there was sewing and cooking—at least, they were supposedly for the girls. But from time to time the boys would enter these classes and sometimes walk away with the prizes.

N. N. Bentley, who went down to Vermilion as science instructor in 1936, tells how from 1937 to 1940, Wilf Malaher was supervisor of school fairs for the province in northern Alberta and George Holeton in southern Alberta. This meant organization, distribution of seed, registration of fairs, and a circuit of school fairs in the fall.

A judging team went on each circuit. I was captain of one of the two school fair judging circuits from Vermilion, he relates: Art Wilson was on the other. On the school fair teams was a home economist and an instructor from the school of agriculture. But they were joined at the fair by the local school inspector and the local district agriculturist.

The school inspector judged the school work—writing, displays, maps, etc. The D.A. judged the poultry and livestock. The instructor from the school of agriculture judged the vegetables, grains, weed displays and most of the collections. The home economist judged the cooking, sewing and handicrafts.

The instructor from the school was captain of the team and had to keep the records, so that a few minutes after the things had been judged the aggregate winner could be named of both boys and girls.

The boy and girl who had the highest number of points were

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winners of the school fair summer short course scholarship—a week at Olds or Vermilion. Very often, said Mr. Bentley, we were awarding a trip to the school of agriculture to a boy or girl who stood 7th, 8th, or 9th instead of first. We often had to do this to get one old enough. Fourteen and over was the age.

S. C. Heckbert, whose prominence in school fair activities we have mentioned, relates as follows:

“Prominent in the work of the Provincial Schools of Agriculture in the earlier days was the program of school fairs, designed to give practical instruction to girls in home economics and to boys in various phases of agriculture. Members of the teaching staffs of the schools, who were available in the spring, summer and fall months for extension work, were enthusiastic in the promotion of the fairs which were extremely popular among the young people, both in rural areas and in the country districts.

“Almost immediately after the close of the spring term, the staff undertook to distribute garden seeds to all pupils in the districts taking part in the program; great quantities of seed were received in bulk and were put in small parcels for distribution to the youngsters and were dispatched to the schools taking part.

“A school fair bulletin was issued by the Department of Agriculture and distributed along with the seeds; the bulletin provided excellent information, not only with respect to proper methods of gardening, but also in connection with certain classes of school work and cooking, sewing and handicrafts. The staff members charged with the operation of the program paid regular visits to the schools taking part, giving instruction with respect to the preparation of the various exhibits which were to be shown at the school fair in the fall.

“Classes in livestock were also available for entry and some of the more prominent livestock men of the present day received their start in this basic industry through the medium of the school fair; livestock principally exhibited consisted of dairy and beef calves, pigs, sheep and ponies and many unusually interesting classes were judged by District Agriculturists or other qualified representatives of the Department each fall when the fairs were held.

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"Judging teams composed of a representative of the Department of Education and members of the Schools of Agriculture staffs visited each of the points designated as the school fair centre, placing awards on the respective exhibits; in addition to cash awards which were provided by the Department there were available scholarships entitling the high girl or boy in each fair to attend a week at the Provincial School of Agriculture in the next summer vacation period and the enthusiasm thus created did much to stimulate interest among the young people.

"School fairs were held mainly during the month of September, immediately after the beginning of the fall term and it is recalled that on many occasions school fair judging teams had to combat conditions of rain and snow while en route from their base at the School of Agriculture to the school fair centre; ordinarily four or five fairs were held in each week and the work entailed was most demanding, especially when weather conditions mitigated against comfortable travelling. In the main, cars provided for the judging teams were Model T Fords, often open cars with indifferent engines and flapping curtains which did little to keep out rain and snow. The first closed car available to any of the judging teams was a 1927 Chevrolet coach, provided for a judging team from the Vermilion school and it was the envy of all such teams for two or three years.

"On one occasion a team from Vermilion started for Bonnyville to judge the results of the work of some twelve or fifteen schools; the weather was anything but desirable with a swirling snowstorm in progress. Trails were simply tracks through an Indian reservation and effective directions were something less than accurate. On this particular occasion the driver became thoroughly confused, with the result that the team became hopelessly lost and the members were forced to spend the night in the open, with temperatures hovering around the freezing mark. A huge fire was finally lighted in a sunken road and the team huddled as close to the fire as safety would permit until daylight made it possible to retrace steps to a recognizable starting point and so to begin the journey all over again.

"The old time school fair served a most useful purpose in

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addition to giving altogether practical instruction to the youthful pupils engaged, by bringing entire districts together for a gala day of comradeship and friendliness and despite discouragement on occasion, members of school of agriculture staffs were convinced that the program was a most useful one, creating, as it did, a wholesome enthusiasm for competition in the several avenues of such exhibition; it was with deep regret that the program was discontinued by the Department and there are undoubtedly thousands of farmers and farmer's wives in the Province today who recall, with the greatest pleasure and pride, their own achievements and those of their friends and schoolmates in the program of school fair work which prevailed so successfully for so long a period."

Those school fairs! First, there were W. J. Elliott and George Holeton at Olds, and Carl Heckbert at Vermilion. Then Hugh McPhail, Walter Benn, Christine McIntyre, Morley Malyon, Miss Milne, Miss Shaw, W. G. Malaher and a host of others took over. Through their enthusiasm they kept alive, wherever they went, the interest in Alberta's Schools of Agriculture.

After his retirement, you couldn't walk down the streets of Olds with Hugh McPhail without being stopped every few minutes, either by some former student or by someone with whom he had become acquainted in the old school fair days.

"I always thought the discontinuing of the school fairs was a mistake," said Dr. O. S. Longman, who took over the position of Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Alberta in 1942.

"From the point of view of the agricultural schools and agriculture, the school fairs were exceedingly worth while," he said. "They kept the department staff in contact with the people and kept the schools before them. If it had not been for the school fairs and the Mormon Church I don't know what we would have done at Raymond."

THE NEW SCHOOLS

Raymond was one of the three new schools opened in 1920. The others were Youngstown and Gleichen.

Superintendent of Schools of Agriculture at that time was A. E. Meyer LL.B. He was appointed in 1918 and continued in that position until the change of government in 1921. In the A.S.A. Magazine for 1918 it is recorded:

“General satisfaction was felt on all sides when the Hon. Duncan Marshall announced the appointment of Mr. A. E. Meyer, LL.B., as Superintendent of the Schools of Agriculture. For some time it has been felt that there should be a definite head to the work in the schools, in order that the various courses might be harmonized and made more uniform.

“Mr. Meyer is admirably qualified to fill the position. He has a life teachers’ certificate, and took a two years’ Practical Science course at the Toronto University, and a three-year course at Ann Arbor, Michigan, graduating with the degree of LL.B. While teaching, he wrote off both his second and third-class certificates under the Agricultural and Arts Association of Ontario. He has had a life long experience on his father’s and afterwards on his own farm near Guelph, where he bred some of the finest Shorthorns ever raised in Ontario.

“Some few years ago, Mr. Meyer came West, and since has identified himself with the development of the livestock industry in Alberta. Mr. Meyer understands the work of the schools, as he taught the livestock course in the Olds School of Agriculture during the winter of 1915-16, where he was a general favorite with all students.”

In the Department of Agriculture Annual Report for 1920, Mr. Meyer writes: “At the new farms at Raymond, Gleichen, and Youngstown, building operations that had begun in 1919 were continued, so that these institutions might be ready for students by October 29th.

“In April a principal was appointed to each of the new schools.

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R. M. Scott, B.A., of the Olds staff was appointed to Youngstown, G. B. Bodman, B.S.A., of the Olds staff to Gleichen and O. S. Longman, B.S.A., of the Claresholm staff to Raymond. Last January, W. J. Stephen, who had been principal for some years at Claresholm, resigned, and J. C. Hooper of the staff was made principal.

"Mr. Scott and Mr. Longman managed the farms at Youngstown and Raymond well on into the summer until farm managers were engaged. At Gleichen, M. L. Freng took charge of the farm in April.

"We had a good many instructors to engage and found it necessary to visit Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Guelph, St. Anne de Bellevue and Lansing, Michigan. We have instructors from the Alberta Agricultural College and from the colleges at all of the places named, with the exception of Lansing. The six schools opened on October 29th with a very satisfactory attendance at each.

"On the three new farms the main school buildings were completed and the carpenter shop, blacksmith shop and central heating plant, all in one, was erected. We have been using part of the carpenter shop as live stock class rooms. Such equipment as it was absolutely necessary to have was purchased for the shops, laboratories, kitchens, pantries, laundries, nurses' room, etc.

"Mr. E. S. Hopkins, who had been stationed at Olds, at the head of soil investigation work, resigned his position at the end of July to accept a position with the Dominion Department of Agriculture. Part of the work begun by Mr. Hopkins, will be carried on by the agronomists with Mr. F. S. Crisdale, of Olds, directing the work."

Here are the first staffs of those new schools:

Gleichen

G. B. Bodman, B.S.A., Principal and Instructor in Science.

M. L. Freng, Farm Manager and Instructor in Animal Husbandry.

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W. Scouten, B.S.A., Instructor in Field Husbandry.

W. J. Hoover, Instructor in Mechanics.

P. A. McDougall, B.A., Instructor in English and Mathematics.

Miss G. Robertson, Instructor in Home Economics.

Miss F. M. Morton, Instructor in Home Economics.

The work in Veterinary Science, Dairying and Home Nursing was presented by the following instructors who were not permanently located at the Gleichen School.

Dr. P. R. Talbot, V.S., Provincial Veterinarian.

Dr. Colin MacPherson, V.S., Veterinary Science.

W. J. Beckett, Dairying.

Miss H. B. Acton, R.N., Home Nursing.

Raymond

O. S. Longman, B.S.A., Principal and Agronomist.

E. G. Minielly, B.S.A., Farm Manager and Livestock Instructor.

W. S. Benn, Instructor in English and Mathematics.

W. A. De Long, B.S.A., Instructor in Science.

Terrance H. Ashby, Assistant Agronomist.

J. E. Davis, V.S., Instructor in Veterinary Science.

A. N. McDonald, Instructor in Dairying.

E. J. Mehew, Instructor in Blacksmithing.

B. J. Rolfson, Instructor in Mechanical Drawing.

Miss W. A. Suttaby, Instructor in Household Science.

Miss J. De Guerre, Instructor in Household Science.

Miss A. L. Fennell, Instructor in Home Nursing.

Miss Nora Swain, Stenographer.

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Youngstown

R. M. Scott, B.A., Principal and Instructor in English and Mathematics.

N. S. Anderson, B.S.A., Farm Manager and Instructor in Animal Husbandry. ,

B. J. Whitbread, B.S.A., Instructor in Agronomy.

J. C. McBeath, B.S.A., Instructor in Science.

T. C. Talbot, Instructor in Mechanics.

Miss M. N. Scott, Instructor in Home Economics.

Miss H. B. Acton, R.N., Instructor in Home Nursing.

Dr. W. J. Moon, V.S., Instructor in Veterinary Science.

W. J. Beckett, Instructor in Dairying.

Dr. Longman tells of his appointment and early experiences as principal of the Raymond school.

From 1917 to 1920 he had been away from Alberta. Until the fall of 1919 he was operating the home farm in Manitoba, and was then employed as extension lecturer by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture in their Agricultural Chatauqua program. While thus engaged, he received a wire from Alberta offering a position on the Claresholm school staff, and from there he accepted the principalship of the new Raymond school.

"I was quite aware," he says, "that I was going to have a difficult task to maintain an adequate enrolment from the limited population of my territory. This limitation was intensified by the fact that the town of Raymond populaton was about 90 per cent Mormon. We had no dormitories and there was a hesitancy on the part of some non-Mormons to send their children to the school if they had to room or board in Mormon homes. This attitude existed and had to be faced. In spite of very strong pressure to the contrary we decided for the first few years to maintain a non-Mormon staff, which in a measure offset the objection.

"My next move was to take officials of the Mormon church into my confidence and seek their co-operation in making the school

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a success. The support that I received was most gratifying. I was invited to use their church pulpit to advance the cause of the school, this offer I was pleased to accept and I used it to the full.

“Eventually we rented a large home and used it for a girls’ dormitory, however in 1927 and 1928 the government erected dormitories at the Olds and Vermilion schools. The availability of this accommodation immediately worked to our disadvantage as parents liked to know their young folk were under dormitory supervision.”

In an earlier report, Dr. Longman records that “The establishment of these new schools proved to be unwarranted in the light of subsequent events, and the protracted drought period experienced in the Youngstown and Gleichen areas. The schools serving these two districts operated only two years, and were then abandoned for other purposes.”

CLARESHOLM AND RAYMOND

Should the schools at Claresholm and Raymond be closed? A great deal of thought and discussion went into this question. As early as 1929 consideration was being given to their closing or removal, and in 1930-31 discussions with the Dominion Department of Agriculture seemed to favour their removal to Lethbridge.

Letters from the Claresholm U.F.A. and the Alberta Co-operative Beet Growers at Raymond in the first months of 1929 both expressed a desire for retention of the schools.

Dated January 14 in that year, the letter from the Beet Growers Secretary, I. B. Roberts, contained the following:

“Resolved that this Association endorses the Agricultural School system operated by the Provincial Government; that we urge the retention of all schools now open and especially the provision of Dormitory facilities at the Raymond School, which serves the Beet Growing areas, to provide accommodation for British boys who may be assimilated on irrigated farms, and so that students in Southern Alberta may receive equal opportunities to those now provided for central and northern Alberta at Olds and Vermilion.”

On February 12, 1929, the Claresholm U.F.A. sent to Hon. George Hoadley a resolution about the Claresholm school from their annual meeting of December 5, 1928, and wrote as follows:

“In addition we would like to say that the School and Farm are functioning in a way that gives us the greatest appreciation and pride in the work of your Department.

“It is so situated geographically as to serve a large District of splendid grain country in a way that we believe would be impossible if it were in a drier District.

“It is of very great value to farmers who observe demonstration fields and observation plots.

“We believe it will be of still greater value in the future when changes in farm practice become imperative as soil depletion occurs.

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"Of our own observation we have noted the immense benefit to the farm boys and girls who take the courses. Nearly every farm home in this District where there are young people of suitable age has one or more members who have taken advantage of the courses of studies offered with great benefit to themselves and the District.

"We would like to suggest that if dormitories could be built for the accommodation of both the boys and girls, the extent to which parents would co-operate in securing for their children the benefits of the courses would be greatly increased."

Then at the United Farmers of Alberta Annual Convention in January 1930, a resolution was passed to the effect that the schools at Claresholm and Raymond be consolidated and operated at Lethbridge in conjunction with the Experimental Farm there, mentioning at the same time that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture had suggested such consolidation.

Discussion and correspondence in this connection passed between Honourable Mr. Hoadley and Honourable Robert Weir, Minister of Agriculture for Canada, and the idea seemed to appeal to both.

In a letter to Mr. Weir on January 8, 1931, Mr. Hoadley advised in part:

"For some time I have been convinced that the two Southern Schools, namely — Claresholm and Raymond — are badly located. The attendance at these Schools has never been large. During the present year the enrolment is 40 at Claresholm and Raymond 78. This attendance does not justify the operation of the two Schools. On account of certain conditions in those respective districts, I see very little hope for large Schools to be built up at either point.

"A few years ago dormitories were built at the Olds and Vermilion Schools, and naturally the students from the Southern part of the Province have a tendency to go to these Schools on account of the extra convenience of the dormitories. The residential life, of course, appeals to them as well.

"Under the conditions just outlined, I have felt that there is no possibility of building up good Schools at either of the Southern

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points. On the other hand I feel satisfied that if these two Schools were closed, and a School established at Lethbridge, that we would not only save the expense of operating one School, but that on account of the attendance which it would be possible to secure, we would be justified in establishing and equipping a School of the same standard as the Schools at Olds and Vermilion.

"As discussed with you when in Ottawa I feel that there is a wonderful opportunity at Lethbridge to co-ordinate the forces of the two Departments. You have a splendid experimental farm, with a number of capable officials attached. A lot of valuable experimental work is being conducted along livestock, grain growing, horticultural, poultry and other lines. It has seemed to me a great pity that the boys and girls living in the districts surrounding these experimental farms should not have the advantage of the splendid work that is there being conducted.

"The staff of such an Institution could be drawn from both Departments. I take it that your officers at Lethbridge would be willing to teach the subjects in which they are particularly interested. It would seem to me that no one would be in a better position to give information on these subjects.

"From what you told me in Ottawa I know that you are sympathetic with this idea, and I have no doubt that there is other information which you would like to have after you study the question. I feel that there is a wonderful opportunity for your Department to make a real contribution in connection with the plan outlined, and to demonstrate that the policy of utilizing the experimental farm in this way is a feasible one and a sensible one as well.

"If your Government would be prepared to erect the necessary buildings on land now occupied by the experimental farm — this Government would be prepared to operate the School. A large part of the equipment could be secured from the Schools at Raymond and Claresholm. The dormitory, of course, would have to be newly equipped."

On February 21, 1931, Mr. Weir asked in reply:

"You will remember at our conference in the fall, we discussed

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the benefit that might come from Agricultural Schools in connection with the experimental farms. If the Federal Government undertook to build these schools in small units, what support would your Government give to the upkeep of the School? Education as you know comes under the scope of the Provinces. I feel that these Schools would contribute a great deal to Agriculture, but I also feel that their continuance as a success would depend on their support by the Province."

There is no doubt that further discussion took place between the two Ministers, and on April 2, 1931, a memo from Hon. George Hoadley to the Premier, Honourable J. R. Brownlee, read as follows:

"Re: Lethbridge Agricultural School

"Attached is correspondence which has passed between Mr. Weir and myself, respecting the above.

"It should not be necessary, at first, to offer to make any contribution towards the erection of the dormitory and classrooms and other equipment that would be needed to create a School at Lethbridge, but there is one thing you might offer to do, if eventually necessary, which would not trouble us very much, and that is to give ten or twenty acres from the Jail Farm on the other side of the road, for a site for the dormitory and classroom buildings.

"I understand that Mr. Weir, whom you will naturally see first in regard to this matter, is very interested in regard to agricultural education, and I think two important points to urge are:

"1st. That it is not a help to us only, but if the Province that initiated Agricultural Schools and has the best on the continent is prepared to close two of its existing Schools and be prepared to co-operate with the Dominion Experimental Farm at Lethbridge in agricultural education, it would be the greatest illustration that could be provided to influence the other Provinces along these lines.

"2nd. That provision for the technical education of irrigation

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agricultural experts is very urgent today and will become greater as we progress. Today we look to the United States to provide these men, and yet we have splendid young men who have grown up and who are growing up on our own irrigated farms, with the clear definite knowledge of all the various conditions of climate, soil, etc., that must be considered on each particular project, without an opportunity to perfect their technical education and give us the service that we need.

"I believe the greatest Agricultural College in the Dominion of Canada can and will come into existence when this idea is carried out at Lethbridge."

Nothing materialized, however, and both Raymond and Claresholm closed in 1931, never to re-open.

With the depression in effect and employment not easy to obtain, not all the staff could be immediately provided for. W. J. Harper, Farm Manager and Instructor in Animal Husbandry, was left at Claresholm to manage the farm and supervise Boys' and Girls' Club work in that district and to do a certain amount of School Fair work.

Miss Christine McIntyre was transferred from Claresholm to the Olds School of Agriculture to take the place of Miss Mary C. King who had resigned in June. Miss McIntyre had been on the staff at Claresholm for eleven years as a teacher of Household Science.

W. S. Benn, who had been teaching English, Mathematics, Co-operation and Public Speaking at Claresholm, was transferred to the Olds School of Agriculture.

C. Asplund remained at the Raymond School to manage the farm and to look after Boys' and Girls' Club work in that district.

In a letter to the Minister, Hon. George Hoadley, dated August 4, 1931, Deputy Minister Craig advised: "I do not see how we can make use of the services of any of the balance of the two staffs. Practically all of them have given very satisfactory service. I think that they should be advised as soon as possible in order that they may have an opportunity of securing other employment—particularly in connection with teaching of Public or High Schools."

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Mr. Craig, however, made every effort to place those who were thus relieved of employment and many of them returned to the department to engage in work for which they were qualified.

With only the two schools of Olds and Vermilion now remaining, faded the Honourable Duncan Marshall's dream of "not six but sixteen agricultural schools for Alberta".

But the agricultural school system was by no means dead, and with building of the dormitories at Olds and Vermilion a new phase of school life began.



Students' Residence at Olds opened in 1927.

DORMITORY DAYS

Erection of the dormitories at Olds and Vermilion added to the attractiveness of student life and offered increased opportunity for social and community training. This training was to a large extent assimilated unconsciously. It was just part of the good time experienced in the various club and social activities. All took part to some extent, and the more one gave the more one received.

Colonel E. W. Cormack, a popular instructor at both Olds and Vermilion, tells of their beginnings in the 1913-63 Golden Echoes of the Olds School of Agriculture. Here is his story:

"During the winter of 1926-27 boarding accommodation in Olds was at a premium. With over two hundred students registered, not to mention the influx of seasonal staff, there just wasn't enough room to tuck everybody away, though the girls and some of the Household Science ladies were the fortunate tenants of three large houses not far from the school grounds. Classroom and laboratory space, built originally for a hundred students, was naturally inadequate for twice that number.

"Mr. Frank Grisdale, the school principal, set up a committee to consider plans and come up with proposals which might in turn be presented to the Provincial Government. As I recollect the chairman was Mr. E. L. Churchill who taught academic subjects, Mr. G. R. Holeton, vice-principal and in charge of shop training and myself. We got all sorts of suggestions, some practical, some quite fantastic, from colleagues, students and wellwishers!

"We learned of a grant available for the building of a library. In addition some other funds might be obtained, towards a gymnasium I believe. The committee set about drawing plans, with the idea of presenting the Government with the plan of a building, including library and gymnasium up to specifications, a couple of extra classrooms, some staff offices and two dormitory wings. By boosting up the gym we found room for a kitchen underneath and were able also to fit a dining room between the dormitory wings. However, in using every effort to hold down cost estimates, we cut out a number

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of items. As a result bedrooms optimistically designed for two people shrank till there was hardly room for both beds; the rotunda narrowed down so that human traffic must always keep on the move. Cupboard space was the very minimum.

"We got our dormitory however and just in time as it turned out when the depression arrived in 1929. It was built very much along the lines of the plans submitted by a committee which lacked an architect but whose members were quite forceful in presenting the case for the O.S.A. The dormitory at Vermilion followed being completed in the summer of 1928, just a year after Olds. Some expansion in bedroom and rotunda size was allowed for in the second case."

Jack Kerns, an Olds graduate of 1928 has a word about those dormitories. He started at the school in the fall of 1926 so spent one year in a boarding house and the second in the dormitory. It was a real and pleasant change, he says. Not that the people in the town were not wonderful supporters of the school — they treated the young people very well indeed — but it wasn't quite so easy to control the boys in the boarding houses.

Jack worked on the building of the Olds dormitory in the summer of 1927. He was labouring on construction at wages of about 50 cents an hour.

And about the dormitory at Vermilion, I have fond memories. In the summer of 1928 I attended the laying of the dormitory foundation stone at Vermilion by the Honourable George Hoadley, who was then Minister of Agriculture, and that fall I entered the school as a student.

The building consisted of dormitory wings on east and west, with a large central structure that was the heart of social and community life. The roomy entrance hall, which led into the large gymnasium, was flanked on the west with cashier's office and classroom, and on the east with the principal's office, mail room, dean's office and library. From the entrance hall, a staircase led up to the assembly hall, which did double duty as a classroom.

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Steps from the hall descended also to the well equipped dining room and kitchen; but entrances from the boys' and girls' wings of the dormitory were the usual dining room approach.

Fortunate were we who were privileged to attend that first year of dormitory life. The well stocked library, which W. G. Malaher worked so hard to assemble and arrange, was the first appeal. The well filled bookshelves behind unlocked, glass fronted doors, had a charm of their own. It was pleasant to browse there on a wintry afternoon or evening, reading fragments from a book here and book there before making a final choice.

As well as technical books in the fields of homemaking and agriculture, there was a wealth of Victorian and modern classics. Remembered still, after 35 years, are Dickens' "Sketches by Boz", and David Grayson's "Adventures in Understanding", as well as such titles as "The Golden Dog", "Maria Chapdelaine" and "The War Trail of Big Bear". The last-named was particularly interesting since its author, Bleasdel Cameron, later spoke to us in the assembly hall upstairs about his Frog Lake massacre experiences.

The early Monday morning assemblies, when Mr. Elliott would lead in the school song and make the necessary announcements for the week; the Friday afternoon lit. periods; the students' council meetings with the students to hear complaints and to give an account of stewardship — all were held in that upstairs assembly hall. Classes too and some of the tests were conducted there. I remember one such test with the kindly veterinarian, Dr. Haworth, encouraging the students, calming their anxiety and suggesting that they take time to think.

The dining room was an excellent institution. To get students acquainted and to avoid the possibility of cliques, lists were posted as to who should sit at each table of eight for the coming week. On Sunday, one sat at any table and special friends got together on that day.

One Sunday breakfast, an informal kind of meal, two or three members of the staff table came down wearing university blazers. At lunch, taking the cue, who should stroll in when the rest were

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seated but student "Samson" (Stanley Johnson), resplendent in his scarlet blazer with the crest of the Hull Grammar School on the pocket. That put a stop to special adornment in the dining room by either staff or student.

The dormitories were pleasantly furnished, with two single beds to a room and desk, lamp and cupboard for each student. Study in the dormitory was well controlled — two hours each evening, after which students got together either in their rooms or in the comfortable sitting rooms for a social time before lights out.

Excellent use was made of the gym, both for its destined purpose and for large assemblies such as graduation, and for the Saturday night dances. There were usually a few in the school who had brought musical instruments with them, and there was little difficulty in providing music for these affairs.

With the versatile, literary, dramatic, athletic and other clubs and activities, every minute of school life seemed occupied.

Principal W. J. Elliott spoke truly when he said:

"In addition to the dormitory accommodation we now have facilities for real student life and activity. One of the boys described his impressions of the changed conditions very aptly when he remarked that present student life as compared with that of the days when all students faced the storms on the long walk, was a thousand per cent better. Students now have a real supervised home, under ideal conditions and there, with the possibilities of the large gymnasium, the additional classroom facilities, the dining room associations, they live with their fellows a splendid community life that should do much for them and make for a profitable period of their life, that will long be remembered".

As to its being long (and pleasantly) remembered, we can well echo with Mr. Elliott: "There's not a shadow of a doubt about it laddie".

THE BRITISH BOYS

But they were difficult times — the late 20's and early 30's, and conditions then put a stop to a plan that had been in operation for bringing out British boys to Alberta and offering them training at the schools of agriculture.

As early as 1913 this matter had been broached when the *Vermilion Standard* for December 3 of that year announced: "Old Country Boys will have Special Training Methods".

The report continued: "A plan is being arranged, with the approval of the Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Duncan Marshall, and Premier Sifton, whereby the Alberta schools of agriculture are to be used for the training of boys from the Old Country who are desirous of coming to Canada for the purpose of taking up agriculture, but who have no knowledge of farming or of western conditions.

"A different course than that adapted for the sons of Alberta farmers is necessary. Regular courses will be run during the winter, and in summer, when the farmers' sons are at work on the farm, boys from the Old Country will be instructed in the principles of agriculture and will have an opportunity of watching the progress of work on demonstration farms.

"The plan has been suggested by Mr. John A. Reid, Agent General for Alberta in London, who states that he finds many Old Country men of means who are willing to give their sons a start in life and would like to see them take up farming in Canada."

Next year, however, the war came along and nothing further was done until 1924 when the Honourable George Hoadley was Minister.

Under this plan the youths, between 16 and 25 years of age, were selected by the Director of European Emigration for Canada in London, and had to be approved by the Overseas Settlement Committee acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. Each of those approved had to provide £50 of his own. This sum was deposited

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with the Overseas Settlement Board before the student left England; and it was placed in the keeping of the principal of the school to which the student was attached.

The boys, on their arrival at the school, were to pay \$30.00 a month for board and room. That and the student's own necessities were what the £50 was for. Transportation was arranged by the Overseas Settlement Board and the Dominion Government, and the actual training was paid for jointly by the Government of Alberta and His Majesty's Government.

The first contingent of 64 boys arrived at the Vermilion School in the summer of 1924 and results were reported "most satisfactory". So for 1925 it was proposed to bring out more boys and distribute them among the three schools of Olds, Vermilion and Claresholm. In that year 69 arrived.

The idea was this: The Alberta Government was to give these boys a comprehensive course of training at the schools with a view to equipping them to become independent farmers in Canada. As well as the ordinary course they were to have special classes that first winter.

They were then to be offered work for the summer with selected farmers, at wages current in the district. The boys were to be encouraged to return to the school at the end of that first summer so that they could continue their training.

Though few remained to farm, the scheme proved worth while in bringing to Canada some very desirable citizens, and many were the walks of life to which they contributed.

About the 1924 contingent, Deputy Minister H. A. Craig, in replying to an overseas correspondent, suggested a little more care in future selection. He noted at the same time, however, that with one or two exceptions the 1925 group were a very fine set of boys—serious minded and evidently anxious to succeed in the country. They got along well with the Canadian students, he said — in fact one of the British boys at Vermilion had been elected President of the student body.

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A statement received by Mr. Craig on wages of one British boy in the summer of 1925 shows \$25 a month for six weeks; \$3 a day for harvest; \$50 a month on hay, and \$5 a day on threshing. That not all received this is evident from criticism from a parent in Britain to the effect that his son received only \$10 a month, and suggesting that more care be taken in selection of farmers both as summer and winter employers.

Godfrey P. Gower was one of the group that came to Vermilion in 1925. In his report, Principal W. J. Elliott placed him among those he considered would be "good farm hands". Gower did his share in this connection before leaving for work in other fields, and as a student at Vermilion was liked and respected by students and staff.

His story offers an example of conditions of the time, and his early experience is probably representative of some of the others who came over.

He tells how on leaving the Royal Air Force in March, 1919, he took advantage of a government grant and studied mechanical engineering. After receiving his diploma in 1922, he tried for three years to obtain work, but without success. In 1925, he cycled to Cambridge hoping for employment but was advised that there were no vacancies.

Passing the emigration office in Cambridge, he was attracted to the colourful posters of Canada showing fields of waving grain. He called in, and in conversation with Colonel Campbell learned of the Hoadley scheme and was advised that an amount of £50 would be required.

He left dejectedly. He had only £14 in the world, but through the good offices of a friend, who loaned him the additional £36, he was soon aboard the "Regina" and on his way to Alberta.

"We were met at the Vermilion station by Mr. Elliott," he recalls. "There were about 30 of us in the class. We were engaged in practical work on the school farm and also took lectures on such topics as dairying, farm management and agronomy. Mr. Whitbread stands out in my mind as a very helpful and sympathetic instructor.

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"After the six months at Vermilion we looked forward to getting work. We were promised a job as part of the scheme. One day Mr. Elliott came to me. 'I have work for you laddie,' he said, 'You'll be paid \$15 a month and your board.'

"I explained to him that I had to have something that paid a little better than that. I owed \$450 by that time and it would be impossible to pay my debts on that salary. Mr. Elliott then got in touch with Dean Howes, with the result that I got work at the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm at 35¢ an hour. For the first four months I cleaned stables, and then helped with soil testing—boring holes all over the farm.

"During the winter, the superintendent, Mr. Albright, was busy figuring results of the past summer's experiments for the annual report. He did this by hand; adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing, and was engaged on it most of the winter.

"In my engineering course I had become familiar with use of the slide rule, and one evening I quietly compared some of Mr. Albright's figures and results with my slide rule calculations. They agreed, so I approached him with the suggestion that I might help him. Mr. Albright was sceptical until I worked out samples which he checked by his method, then told me to go ahead. In three weeks I had the figures completed.

"The second year he let me do the whole thing. In the 1927 Beaverlodge report the figures are all mine."

Gower remained at Beaverlodge for two years. By that time he had earned enough to pay his debts and had a surplus of \$150. So after Christmas in 1928 he decided to take a holiday. He left for Edmonton and from there went to visit his friends in Vermilion.

While at Vermilion he attended service in St. Saviour's Church, and was told that the Bishop would like to see him. He had thought of seeing Dean Howes and continuing his education in agriculture. Instead he called on Bishop Gray in Edmonton.

"You're Gower eh!" said the Bishop. "Well, you are the ninth

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man." He then went on to explain that 33 men had gone overseas from the Edmonton diocese during the First World War, and nine had not returned. Eight had been replaced and Gower was to be the ninth.

Following graduation from St. John's College, Winnipeg, he went to Sedgewick, from there to Camrose and then to Christ Church, Edmonton. He volunteered as chaplain and returned in 1944. He then took over St. Paul's in Vancouver and in 1951 became Bishop of New Westminster in British Columbia.

"It was in Alberta that I found myself," he says. "I recall particularly one peaceful fall evening at Beaverlodge — the rustle of ripening grain, the chatter of the birds, and the occasional voice in the distance. I felt then at one with nature — part of existence. In later times of stress I have often regained poise by reverting to that scene."

Another of the British group was H. A. H. Wallace, now plant pathologist with the Canada Department of Agriculture in Winnipeg.

He was born in Winnipeg but returned with his parents to England at an early age. He tells that when working for a firm of accountants in London, he had noticed from time to time on the floor below, the office of the Province of Alberta.

In 1927, having written and passed his accounting exams., but not in the top requirement, he saw an advertisement in one of the papers about British boys for Alberta and mention of the school at Vermilion. He dropped into the Alberta office, talked with the Agent-General, Mr. Greenfield, and ten days later was aboard the "Corsican" on his way to Canada.

He was engaged the first winter in the practical work of the British boys group, worked on a farm in the summer of 1928, returned that fall for the 2 in 1 course at Vermilion and went on from there to the University.

He speaks of the difficulty of finding work in 1929 and of the great scarcity of money on the farm. It was a depressing time, he

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recalls, and undoubtedly had its effect on some of the boys returning to England and others turning to occupations with greater promise.

Names could be mentioned of many who progressed favourably, and of some who did not. A summary report of 1931 records that, on the whole, the plan worked out fairly well, although the government was disappointed at the small number who remained in agricultural work. Of these, some bought farms, others homesteaded, and others were partners or managers of farms. But most of those remaining on the farm were there as farm hands. Unless a boy had other means than his wages he was not likely to be in a position to acquire a farm, livestock and equipment.

But many of these boys were in employment other than farming. The fact remains, the report pointed out, that they are employed and earning something, whereas before leaving England they were not working and had little hope of finding employment of any kind.

"Many of the boys who came forward had a partial training in some commercial line," continues the report. "They were bright, keen and well educated and it did not take them long to find a place with business firms. Their desire to succeed was marked and some have progressed rapidly.

"In this connection a few positions now held by these boys might be mentioned. One is manager of one of the largest city engraving establishments, another is a chief clerk in an interurban railway, another is a successful salesman for a wholesale chemist, still another is manager of a co-operative store, three have joined the provincial police and two others have gone in for the ministry. We presume we could mention at least fifty or sixty who have done well and as many more who are doing fair, and given a little longer time will undoubtedly find a place for themselves."

There were criticisms from parents and friends of those who were unable to adjust, and there is no doubt that it was far from a picnic for some of these boys. The report adds further:

"You can say of this plan what may be said of every scheme of whatsoever nature, there are those who are not suited to either the

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plan or the conditions of the country. Canada is a young country. It is a pioneer country, and as such is for those who can work and who are not easily disheartened or discouraged. In addition to this we have had to face two or three discouraging years, when work was hard to find, and when wages were small. While such years and conditions are by no means peculiar to Canada, they are testing times and unless the boys have the right kind of stamina they are apt to become discouraged."

In 1929, the last group of boys from overseas arrived at the Vermilion School of Agriculture. They were nine Scottish Boy Scouts who came out under scholarships given by the Fellowship of the British Empire Exhibition. The scholarship consisted of fifty pounds or sufficient to take the five months course with the Canadian boys.

After a summer on the farm at wages between ten and fifteen dollars a month, they returned to the school under similar scholarship arrangements to complete the diploma course.

In February, 1930, it was decided not to accept further applications under this plan. Times were bad, crops poor and many people were on relief. The difficulty of placing boys on farms was extreme, and it was pointed out that unless employment could be found for them their condition would not be improved by sending them to Canada.

A cable from H. A. Craig to Agent-General Herbert Greenfield on February 4, 1930, recorded the end of the Hoadley Plan. It read: "Government has decided that British boys training scheme will be discontinued this year — have written."

"Looking at this scheme since its inauguration," the report concludes, "we consider that it has been worth while because of the fact that a considerable number of very desirable British boys have become, and are becoming, successfully established in the Province of Alberta."

They certainly added to the life of the schools, and are affectionately remembered by those Canadian students who had the good fortune to be associated with them.

DEPRESSION AND WAR

With the closing of the schools at Claresholm and Raymond in 1931, Olds and Vermilion only remained. Courses at the Olds school continued unbroken, and every year the school opened to its usual class of students.

At Vermilion, the school continued to operate until the close of the 1932-33 term. It was then closed for a year, but was re-opened in the fall of 1934 following representations from the local Board of Trade and the V.S.A. Alumni Association.

Enrolment was encouraging. There were 165 registered when the Vermilion term started, 91 of whom were first year men. The next year, 1935-36, in spite of the early August frost and consequent crop damage, 169 students enrolled.

Courses then continued until the close of the 1940-41 term when they were discontinued for the period of the war. The school was turned over to the Department of National Defence and occupied until 1945 by the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

In the 1944 annual report of the Department, the Deputy Minister wrote of the Olds school: "At the close of the 1943-44 term in April, 45 young men graduated in Agriculture and 29 young women received diplomas in Home Economics. Total enrolment for the new term in the fall of 1944 was 182, of which 69 were two-in-one students. The services of this school are in great demand, and it is unfortunate that lack of adequate accommodation made it necessary to refuse admission to over 100 applicants this year.

"The primary object of the School of Agriculture is to offer students such training in Agriculture and Home Economics as will fit them for their chosen work on the farm and in the home, but since it is realized that farm youth with its background of practical agricultural training does provide a sound basis for studies in agricultural science, encouragement is given to those with the necessary desire and ability to continue towards a degree course at the University. During the past 30 years, 335 students from agricultural schools have entered the University of Alberta, 225 of whom received

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Bachelor degrees in Agriculture, 60 continued for their Master's degrees, and 24 attained the status of Ph.D. From one to six graduates in Home Economics continue each year towards a degree."

In the meantime, consideration was being given to resurrection of the Board of Agricultural Education which had not been called together since 1920.

The Agricultural Schools Act under which the schools were established called for a Board of Agricultural Education to be composed of the superintendent of the schools of agriculture, the Dean of Agriculture at the University of Alberta, and nine additional members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, three of whom were graduates of an agricultural college.

A superintendent of schools, Mr. A. E. Meyer, was appointed in 1918 but his services terminated in 1921. Since then the deputy minister of agriculture had served as superintendent of the schools.

In 1944, following strong representations by Deputy Minister O. S. Longman, a new Board was formed and S. H. Gandier was appointed superintendent of the schools of agriculture.

In the Department of Agriculture report for 1945, Mr. Gandier advised that:

"Under provisions of the Agricultural Schools Act, a preliminary Board of Agricultural Education with 11 members was named by the Minister in 1944, and one meeting was held in the fall of that year. A Co-ordination Committee was appointed to gather material for the further information of the Board. This committee held two meetings and brought in a report, its main recommendations being the continuance of the Schools of Agriculture policy under the direction of the Department of Agriculture, and the inclusion of agricultural courses on a modest scale in the Composite High Schools presently proposed by the Department of Education.

"In accordance with 'The Act to Amend the Agricultural Schools Act', assented to on March 28th last, (1945), the Minister announced the personnel of a permanent board of Agricultural Education as follows:

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"Hon. D. B. MacMillan, Minister of Agriculture, Chairman; Dr. G. Fred McNally, Deputy Minister, Department of Education; Dr. R. D. Sinclair, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alberta; O. S. Longman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture; J. M. Wheatley, President Alberta Association of Municipal Districts; Rudolph Hennig, Director Alberta School Trustees' Association; Lew Hutchinson, President Alberta Federation of Agriculture; Walter L. Perley, representing the Alumni of the Schools of Agriculture; Mrs. Winnifred Ross, President United Farm Women of Alberta; Mrs. E. E. Morton, President Alberta Women's Institutes; Thomas Smart, Grimshaw, and J. L. McIntosh, Dimsdale, members-at-large; S. H. Gandier, Superintendent of Schools of Agriculture, Secretary; ex-officio members, James Murray and N. N. Bentley, Principals of the Schools of Agriculture at Olds and Vermilion respectively."

The first meeting of this permanent Board was held on November 12, 1945, with all members present. Members were acquainted with policies then extant, and a brief historical review was presented by Mr. Longman. Dr. Sinclair called attention to the greatly overcrowded conditions in the first year course of the College of Agriculture, and reported urgent needs in the Faculty of Agriculture. These were — increase in staff; proper facilities for poultry instruction and research; an Agricultural Building to house all agricultural departments and provide suitable lecture and laboratory accommodation.

Dr. McNally presented a brief report on present Dominion-Provincial agreements relating to vocational training within the Province. He informed the Board that his Department had under advisement the establishment of several Composite High Schools at widely separated points.

In the course of the meeting opportunity was given to all members to comment briefly on any matters they might wish to bring to the attention of the Board. As an example of what the schools meant in the minds of the public, their comments are of interest.

Mr. Hennig mentioned the rural leadership given throughout the Province by graduates of the Schools of Agriculture. Mr. Wheatley predicted a growing demand for training offered at the

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Schools of Agriculture and thought it essential that they should continue to operate under the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Hutchinson observed that we must not lose sight of the first objective of the schools, a good, sensible, working education. The present program has been highly successful and should be maintained in principle. In Mr. Perley's opinion more opportunity might be given the individual student at the School of Agriculture to specialize in those branches in which he is specially interested.

Mrs. Morton cited the Schools of Agriculture as builders of the co-operative spirit where the students received training in the art of living together. Both Mr. Smart and Mr. McIntosh expressed the appreciation of the people of their districts that some consideration was being given the north country in developing our agricultural education program.

With the end of the war and appointment of the Board, the schools were away to a new start. The Vermilion school was reopened, attendance at both schools was good, and for the next decade the courses continued to fill a need in the agricultural life of the Province.

VERMILION RE-OPENS

The war was over. The courses in agriculture and home economics at the sole remaining school at Olds had been in such demand that students had been turned away because of insufficient room.

On October 30, 1945, the Vermilion school was re-opened. Classes were limited to 80 students in agriculture and 40 in home economics. The reason for this was to allow space in the following year for a first year class of reasonable size. There were more applicants than could be accommodated, and many of these, particularly those of minimum age, were held over to the next school term.

The first step was to appoint a principal for the school, and the choice fell on N. N. Bentley who was then supervisor of crop improvement for the Alberta Department of Agriculture, and had previously served on the Vermilion school staff.

"In 1936, I started at the Vermilion School of Agriculture as instructor in agricultural science and soils," he relates. "That was the last year that Mr. Elliott was there.

"Eric Cormack and Art Wilson were there at the time, together with Dave Andrew and Wilf. Malaher. These are the people whose attitudes and qualities influenced me. In household economics were Miss Storey, Miss Shaw, Miss Milne and Miss Goodall.

"I stayed there until the school closed in 1941 and during that time, for the first and only time in the history of the schools, the number of girls exceeded the number of boys. That was in 1940-41. I spent four years there under Mr. Gandier."

When the school closed in 1941, Bentley came to Edmonton as district agriculturist and from there became supervisor of crop improvement. On June 15, 1945, he was appointed principal of the Vermilion school and started duties August 1.

"In 1945," he recalls, "we had a little group of students out of the army — Martin Albers, Reg. McVeeters, Bill McLean and Arnold

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Cowen — all holding captain or flight lieutenant rank. Although there were a few ex-service personnel in that first year the larger influx didn't occur until the following year."

That first year of the new era, 1945-46, started under extreme handicap. The buildings were in a bad state of repair. All the fittings of the buildings had been taken out, and the buildings had to be refitted and redecorated.

There were no furnishings, and these were extremely difficult to obtain, even if money had been no object. Rationing of sugar, meat, tea and coffee was still in effect, and a special storage bin had to be prepared for them.

Then too, staff was extremely difficult to engage. All forms of professional staff were scarce, and they had to be obtained quickly. Announcement of the opening was not made until June 15 and the staff had to be ready by the end of October.

"When I arrived and drove into the schoolgrounds," says Mr. Bentley, "a neighbouring farmer was raking hay with a team of horses and a dump rake on the grounds near the dormitory. The arrangement was that he could have the hay for cutting it."

He goes on to tell that one of the highlights of that experience was the engaging of Jack Kerns and Laurie Blades. Jack Kerns, who was district agriculturist at Camrose, came to the staff as instructor in animal husbandry. Laurie Blades was a former staff member. He consented to return and teach English and community organization—subjects that he had been teaching in 1941 when the school closed.

A letter came in from Phil A. Alt, in which he volunteered to come back and take on again the job of bookkeeper at a financial sacrifice in the interest of getting the place re-established. Mrs. Bell who had been working with the Treasury Branch down town also volunteered to return as secretary.

On the staff then, were one staff member, a bookkeeper and a secretary who had been previously employed at the school.

Jack Kerns, and J. J. Patterson (who came from the Lethbridge

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Experimental Farm as instructor in farm mechanics), had not previously been staff members and had never taught. But both were graduates of Olds and were familiar with the philosophy and traditions of the schools of agriculture.

Esther Anderson, Home Economist at Stettler and also a graduate of Olds, accepted a teaching position on the home economics staff. Mrs. Emma Atchison became dean of women and dietitian. She was a former staff member at Claresholm.

Livestock then had to be procured. Permission was received to purchase ten head of dairy cattle as a nucleus for instruction and to provide the milk, which could not be bought locally, for consumption in the dormitory.

Jack Kerns went out and bought ten head of Holstein cows where he could find them. They became the foundation for the dairy herd at Vermilion and later provided the breeding foundation for both Olds and Fairview.

For the first time in the history of the schools, it was decided not to establish a herd of beef cattle at Vermilion. Instead, the cattle were selected locally; some bought and some borrowed.

Then again, there were the breeders of the district to visit, and their co-operation meant much to the school and its students.

Within a radius of four miles, students could be taken out to see good livestock. For Shorthorns there was Lyle Robinson, three miles down the road. East of town was Bill Cross with his herd of Aberdeen Angus. Jack Cross and Mike Ilchuk had herds of Herefords. These would be visited two or three times a year.

Once a year or so, Alex Mitchell's herd of Herefords at Lloydminster would be viewed. Available too was the Holstein herd of Bill Barr who supplied milk to the town of Vermilion.

Herd management and feeding practices were thus readily available and good use was made of them.

Just at this time, farm mechanization was coming into its own

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in progressive agriculture in Alberta. Until then, the schools had had little in the way of classroom and shop facilities for farm mechanics.

When Vermilion re-opened in 1945, there was a new building of ample proportions on the campus. It had served as a drill hall for the Canadian Women's Army Corps and had been turned over to the school by the Department of National Defence. It was decided that this new building would house the farm mechanics — motor mechanics, farm machinery and farm buildings instruction.

This proved so satisfactory that within two years an air force hangar had been bought at Bowden and moved to Olds for instruction in farm mechanics. When the school at Fairview was established a similar building was transported there.

Several innovations were introduced at Vermilion at that time. One was limiting the number of students in laboratories and classrooms. The maximum was set at 20 students per lab. and 40 students per lecture session. This meant more labs. and lectures for the staff, but it prevented overcrowding and allowed for more individual attention.

Another change was the outlining in detail of courses of study. In the spring of 1946, after the first winter term, all staff members met for at least half of each day for a week. They described in turn what they had taught in the past winter. The outline was then discussed, suggestions made and modifications proposed.

The result was that next fall, for the first time, subjects were down in considerable detail, and approved and filed for the record.

Towards the end of the 1930's a trend was developing towards late registration and students leaving early in the spring. When Vermilion re-opened in 1945, this tendency was again noted, and there was a temptation in some cases to leave for home for the weekend. If this were to continue the effect of the social and community atmosphere of the school would be reduced, and something had to be done to discourage students from leaving.

So they were encouraged to stay at the school from registration

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to the Christmas holidays and from the Christmas holidays to the end of the term. To deter late registration and early leaving, a student's aggregate standing at the end of the term was reduced by so many points for each unapproved classroom absence.

To encourage students to remain over the weekend, penalties for absence were imposed, and all were induced to take part in the hockey games, entertainments and other forms of student activity. The social life of the school was considered a community organization laboratory in practice and every effort was made to have the student take part. This had, indeed, been an objective from the beginning. It had always been felt that the social and community life of the schools was a very important part of the training offered.

In his annual report of 1945, Superintendent S. H. Gandier (with reference to Vermilion) paid the following tributes:

"In its re-establishment this year," he said, "the school has had the wholehearted support of the business men and citizens of Vermilion and district. While the school was closed, its Alumni Association continued to function and this large body of ex-students will be an active factor in the future activities of this institution as it has been in the past."

In the days that were to follow, the Alumni Associations of both Olds and Vermilion were to play an important part in the progress and welfare of the schools.



Vermilion School of Agriculture in 1962.

CHANGE

It was in the 1950's that the question began to be asked: Have the schools of agriculture served their purpose? Are they out-dated? Should they be discontinued?

"No," said the Alumni, and set to work to show that the schools still had a place.

Change was required though. There was no doubt that they needed to be brought up to date. And just how this should be done occupied the thoughts and energy of many people around that time.

Bringing the matter more emphatically to the attention of those responsible for administration of the schools was the Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Alberta (1958). Chairman of the Commission was Senator Donald Cameron, Director of the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Among institutions and organizations presenting briefs on agricultural education were the Alumni Associations of the Schools of Agriculture, the Junior Farmers' Union of Alberta, the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta, the Alberta Institute of Agrologists and the Alberta Department of Agriculture.

Individuals too were giving thought to the matter. One of those keenly aware of the need was J. E. Birdsall, Principal of the School of Agriculture at Olds, and a former graduate of the school. Others were Principal N. N. Bentley of Vermilion who saw a need for closer liaison with the public school system, and J. E. Hawker, Principal at Fairview. Following his appointment as Director of the Schools in 1956, it fell to the lot of Mr. Hawker to keep the ship afloat during those difficult times, to impress on the owners the value of the cargo, and to steer a course to safety.

Attendance at the schools had been declining steadily. Total attendance at Olds, Vermilion and Fairview had been: 1953, 394; 1954, 370; 1955, 346; 1956, 291 and 1957, 237.

Why was this? "Lack of modernization," some said. "Schools



Olds School of Agriculture in 1963.

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are being built that are much more attractive than our schools of agriculture. Equipment is outdated, staffs change too frequently, and thought should be given to the fact that formal education for farm boys and girls is much more readily available than it was at the schools' foundation."

But there were other reasons. With better educational opportunities, boys and girls were going into lines of work other than farming and homemaking. Jobs were more plentiful, and with petroleum and industrial development, wages paid to young people were attractive.

Cheap land was no longer available and farm machinery was expensive. Without land or substantial financial support it was difficult now to make a start.

Then too, the trend was to larger farms and fewer operators. From 93,000 in 1941, the number of occupied farms in Alberta had declined to less than 80,000 in 1956. A feeling of unrest among rural youth, due to the adverse farming conditions prevailing, also influenced choice of a field of endeavour other than farming.

In 1957, Angus McKinnon was alumni representative on the Board of Agricultural Education. He graduated from Olds in 1916 and had maintained throughout the years close association with the school.

On the way to Edmonton to attend the Board meeting in May of that year, he and Ev. Birdsall discussed thoroughly this matter of more up to date facilities for the schools. "Angus," said Birdsall, "played an important part in bringing this matter forward." At that meeting, the Board recommended that the schools of agriculture be kept up to modern standards at least the equal of other institutions.

But as with all proposed operations, the matter of cost was broached. From some quarters, criticism was being levelled at the alleged high cost of the schools, and the secretary was instructed to supply statements of per capita costs for the 1956-57 term.

On June 11, 1957, Angus McKinnon wrote to the secretaries of

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the Vermilion and Fairview Alumni Associations, to Arnold Platt, President of the Farmers' Union of Alberta, and to Jim McFall, Secretary of the Alberta Federation of Agriculture. Both Platt and McFall were graduates of the schools of agriculture.

"For a number of years," McKinnon wrote, "I have noted that facilities at the Olds School of Agriculture have been aging and becoming obsolete and that no program has been adopted to correct the situation and to maintain the School at a standard in keeping with the importance of Agriculture in Alberta and the vital nature of the service the School is attempting to give. Since coming on the Board I have learned that the same situation exists at Vermilion and that retrenchment at Fairview has reached such a stage as to seriously prejudice the future of the School."

Further along, he wrote: "I am sure no organization realizes more fully than yours the great increasing need for an educated rural population. You will also realize that without the dignity that goes with adequate buildings, properly equipped and maintained, the Schools cannot hope to attract either competent staff or able students. To retrench when enrolment drops off is to aggravate the problem. Furthermore, we must offer agriculture in an attractive package if the cream of our young people are not all to be lured away by those who are offering them a glittering future on a silver platter."

But changes were in the offing, and a sign of hope appeared in the Superintendent's report to the Board of Agricultural Education at their meeting on April 18, 1958. Not only had a new dairy barn been authorized for the Olds school, but he reported that a turning point in the trend to lower enrolment seemed to have been reached in 1957. For the first time since the 1955-56 term, he reported, accommodation for agricultural students had been filled at both Olds and Vermilion.

At that meeting, a Liaison Sub-Committee was appointed by the Honourable L. C. Halmrast, Minister of Agriculture. Members were Dr. C. F. Bentley, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Alberta; Dr. T. C. Byrne, Chief Superintendent of Schools, Department of Education; Miss G. Duggan, representing

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the Director of the School of Home Economics, University of Alberta; and J. E. Hawker (Chairman), Superintendent of the Schools of Agriculture.

When the Board met in 1959, the sub-committee recommended:

- 1) That the principle of offering elective subjects in both agriculture and home economics should be recognized.
- 2) That a core of essential subjects should be set out for each year in both agriculture and home economics.
- 3) That course patterns, including some electives, should be set out for both agriculture and home economics.

Early in 1951, construction of the new School of Agriculture at Fairview had been completed, and in 1951-52 first year courses in agriculture and home economics were offered.

On November 6, 1951, the school was officially opened with R. M. Putnam, Superintendent of Schools of Agriculture, in the chair. The Inaugural Address was delivered by the Honourable E. C. Manning, Premier of Alberta. Others taking part in the ceremony were Honourable D. A. Ure, Minister of Agriculture; Mayor Peterson of the Town of Fairview; O. S. Longman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture; Dean A. G. McCalla, University of Alberta; A. B. Evenson, Associate Director of Curriculum, Department of Education; W. F. Gilliland, M.L.A., Berwyn; R. C. Marler, President, Alberta Federation of Agriculture; Mrs. Lorne Harris, Director, Alberta Women's Institute, Berwyn; W. A. Hemstock, President, Associated Boards of Trade and Agriculture; and the newly appointed Principal of the School, J. E. Hawker.

Mr. Hawker had received his B.A. and B.Sc. degrees from the University of Alberta, had taught high school, and in 1943 was appointed Instructor in Field Crops at the Olds School of Agriculture. In 1945 he became Instructor in Horticulture and Botany at the Vermilion School of Agriculture and remained there until his appointment as Principal of the Fairview School in 1951. He later became Superintendent of the Schools of Agriculture, succeeding R. M. Putnam to that position in 1955 when Mr. Putnam became Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

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In 1953 the first graduates received their diplomas. There were 24 in Agriculture and 6 in Home Economics. It was in this year that typing and employment training were introduced into the course in Home Economics. This action had been recommended by the Board of Agricultural Education in an attempt to meet the need of many girls who sought employment for a few years after graduation and before they became homemakers.

In 1956 Peter Jamieson became Principal at Fairview following appointment of J. E. Hawker as Superintendent of Schools of Agriculture. Mr. Jamieson had for many years been District Agriculturist with the Department and moved to his new position from Lethbridge.

Courses proceeded as usual until, on March 7, 1958, tragedy occurred. Fire swept through the buildings, destroying the boiler room, gymnasium and shops, and resulting in cessation of courses at Fairview.

On September 1, 1960, the Fairview School was re-opened and named the Fairview Community College. Academic students and first year agriculture and home economics students only were admitted. Enrolled were 23 students in agriculture, 9 in home economics and 32 in academic subjects.

The academic students lived at the college but received instruction at the Fairview High School.

For the agricultural students, training in farm mechanics was difficult, since the mechanics building, destroyed by fire, had not yet been replaced. The work was carried forward by offering the vocational training on a trimester basis. As a result, some second year work was taught in the first year.

In the fall of 1961, the trimester system was continued and accommodation again provided for academic, agriculture, and some economics students. A new program of studies was arranged for the girls, to include special training in Clothing or special training in Foods.

This trimester idea seemed to have merit, and in 1962 a sessional

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system was introduced at both Olds and Fairview. Each session extended just over three months and was terminal. Two such sessions were offered in the 1962-63 school year at Olds and Fairview.

Some courses ran longer than the two sessions. These included Commercial, Clothing, Automotives, and Food Service Management.

At Vermilion, the traditional school year was maintained from October 22 to April 5. The general course in Home Economics was retained only at Vermilion and as a one year course. It was replaced at Olds and Fairview by special courses in the areas of Clothing, Foods and to some extent Commercial.

Although change had been in many minds since the middle 1950's, when it did arrive it came suddenly. "It was just as though a log jam broke," said Olds Principal J. E. Birdsall.

At Olds, the new Plant Science building was completed and in the winter of 1961-62 the staff moved in. The opening of the building, the enthusiasm created, and the bringing of the staff together in one building resulted in renewed growth of ideas.

When the Board of Agricultural Education met in April 1962, the sub-committee had prepared a report for submission to the Cabinet, which went instead to a committee of the Cabinet. From there, change was rapid. A spring session and a fall session were initiated which went into effect at Olds in 1962. In 1963 it had become a three session program, with two semesters in effect at Vermilion and Fairview.

The effect of some of these changes can be gleaned from the annual report of Mr. Birdsall for the year 1962.

"The year 1962," he writes, "may be recorded as one of the most eventful in the history of the school. It was a year of progress and change.

"Enrolment was near capacity in Agriculture, but after a very low enrolment in the spring term, the general Home Economics course was discontinued after 49 years of operation.

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"The fall session opened about one month early on September 24. Students enrolling in Agriculture were the first under a new program. The school year was divided into two 12-week sessions with final examinations being written at the end of each session. Students with good Grade XI standing, or more, are able to obtain a diploma in three sessions while those with less education require at least four sessions to complete the program. The new program was designed to allow for specialization in Animal Science, Plant Science, Farm Mechanics, Farm Management, or for a general program. A start was also made in training students for occupations related to agriculture.

"To replace the general Home Economics course, Commercial training and a course in Clothing and Design were introduced and drew thirteen and fourteen students respectively. The Commercial course is 9 months in length while the course in Clothing and Design consists of three 12-week sessions. Both these courses will continue to June 21, 1963, while courses in agriculture will terminate on April 5, 1963.

"Plans were made for all courses to operate for between nine and ten months in 1963-64 when Agriculture will be extended to three-month sessions."

Thus were born the Alberta Agricultural and Vocational Colleges. All this may seem a far cry from the original idea of educating boys and girls for the farm, but agriculture has now expanded until it embodies a multitude of vocations. Technicians are required in dairying, in horticulture, in livestock and in allied commercial industry. So specialist vocational courses are offered. Not only is wider scope provided in the regular studies, but courses in vocational horticulture and in other specialties are now extant.

With improved facilities and renewed enthusiasm, the schools (now colleges) can look forward to continuing their services to agriculture, and to carrying on their tradition of training for leadership in the community life of the province.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

OLDS

1913-19	W. J. Elliott
1919-29	F. S. Grisdale
1930-46	James Murray
1946-49	F. N. Miller
1949-52	C. E. Yauch
1952-	J. E. Birdsall

VERMILION

1913-15	E. A. Howes
1916-18	F. S. Grisdale
1919-21	J. G. Taggart
1922	J. McBeath
1924-37	W. J. Elliott
1938-41	S. H. Gandier
1945-60	N. N. Bentley
1960-	W. S. Baranyk

FAIRVIEW

1951-55	J. E. Hawker
1955-58	P. Jamieson
1960-64-	V. W. Osbaldeston
1964-	M. Jaque

RAYMOND

1920-31	O. S. Longman
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GLEICHEN

1920-23	G. B. Bodman
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YOUNGSTOWN

1920-23	R. M. Scott
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CLARESHOLM

1913-19	W. J. Stephen
1920-23	J. C. Hooper
1924-31	S. H. Gandier

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